- **WORLD / A26**

**At 70, Japanese is oldest man to summit Everest**

- **BUSINESS / B1**

**Banco de Oro, Equitable PCIB merger fizzles out as SM group offer lapses**

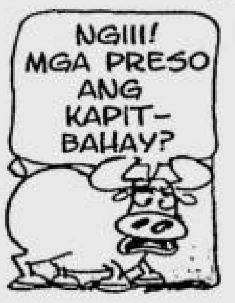
- **LIFESTYLE / C1**

**38 ways to beat boredom, get busy at tailend of summer**

- **WORLD/ A26**

**Thaksin stages comeback, takes control of Thai gov't**

## Bilibid or not: Munti cops, teachers to get dream homes


NGIII! MGA PRESO ANG KAPIT-BAHAY?

**Jocelyn R. Uy**

BILIBID OR NOT.

Public school teachers and policemen in Muntinlupa will finally get a chance to build their dream homes—in the sprawling New Bilibid

BILIBID/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, May 24, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 165 P18 website: www.inq7.net

## New contraceptives make menstrual period optional

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY—FOR YOUNG WOMEN with a world of choices, even that monthly curse, the menstrual period, is now optional.

Due to birth control pills and other hormonal contraceptives, a growing number of women are taking the path chosen by 22-year-old Stephanie Sardinha. She hasn't had a period since she was 17.

"It's really one of the best things I've ever

NEW CONTRACEPTIVES/ A21

## *GMA: I'll take RP to 'Enchanted Kingdom' of First World*

**By Christine O. Avendaño**

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday rallied employers to the side of government, saying that by working together they could achieve a better future for the country and reach the "Enchanted Kingdom" of First World success.

"Let's stay together. Let's dream together. And what do I mean by being in the Enchanted Kingdom, we can operationalize that? Let's be among the countries of the First World in 20 years," the President told the largest national gathering of employers at the 27th National Conference of Employers at the Manila Hotel yesterday.

At the start of her speech, the President agreed with the theme of the employers' convention which was to "Survive, Compete, Succeed."

"As Francis [Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce] said, we've shown we can survive. Now we must compete and then succeed. Then we will be in the Enchanted Kingdom," the President said to laughter from the audience.

According Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, the reference to the Enchanted Kingdom also had to do with the chair of the conference's organizing committee being the owner of the Enchanted Kingdom theme park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Ms Arroyo said the theme of the convention was "logical" given this "age of globalization and high technology, and in these days of oil price surges."

"Your response is logical: Survive, compete with the rest of the world and succeed," she said.

But when the President ap-

GMA/ A4

# Killings alarm int'l group

## Gonzales lying about mass graves, says Zubiri

**By Grace Cantal-Albasin**
*PDI Mindanao Bureau*
**and Michael Lim Ubac**
*in Manila*

MALAYBALAY CITY—WHAT MASS graves?!

Bukidnon Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri yesterday belied claims by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales that the military had unearthed two mass graves in the province containing the skeletal remains of 18 communist rebels and sympathizers who had been killed by their comrades.

"He (Gonzales) made it appear that Bukidnon is a massacre field.

GONZALES/ A7

## I just wanted to have fun, says Abcede

**By Alcuin Papa**

"I JUST WANTED TO HAVE FUN with friends."

This was the statement of Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) Commissioner Ricardo Abcede on why he celebrated his birthday on May 12 with former First Lady Imelda Marcos in attendance.

Abcede and the PCGG are trying to negotiate a compromise

I JUST/ A8

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

**THY KINGDOM COME: President Arroyo poses with Cardinal Ricardo Vidal (left) and Msgr. Francisco Montecillo Padilla and other bishops who attended the episcopal ordination of Padilla at the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral on Tuesday. Padilla is also the apostolic nuncio to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.**

## Gov't to allow journalists to bear arms

**By Armand N. Nocum**
**and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.**

THE GOVERNMENT IS AMEnable to arming members of the media as a solution to the continuing killing of journalists, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday.

But Gonzalez said the media should rid its ranks of "hao siao" journalists, or the poseurs and mercenaries working mainly for money.

"We discussed [the matter] in the Palace earlier. And if they want to carry firearms, we will allow them to do so as long as they are legitimate [journalists]," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

He said the proposed solution was premised on the fact that "you cannot watch every criminal at every corner."

"If they blame [the media killings] on the government, then I think they should tell us what they want from the government," the justice secretary said.

"Do they want to get bodyguards? Do they want to carry firearms? We will allow them to carry firearms to protect themselves," he said.

But according to Gonzalez, not all of the murdered journalists were killed in connection with their profession. He said each case should be thoroughly examined.

"Let us make a complete study of all these people killed. What were the reasons? You have to be

GOV'T/ A8

## PNP, AFP say they are not responsible

**By Norman Bordadora**
**and Dona Z. Pazzibugan**

THE RECURRING SCEnario in the Philippines of activists being gunned down by motorcycle-riding men is now one of the concerns of Amnesty International (AI).

In its 2006 report, the London-based human rights organization noted the "sharp rise" in the killing of militant activists and community workers, as well as the "climate of impunity" that, it said, was "shielding the perpetrators."

"Most of the attacks were carried out by unidentified assailants on motorcycles, at times wearing face masks, who were often described as 'vigilantes' or hired killers allegedly linked to the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)," Amnesty International said.

The 318-page report on the state of human rights in 150 countries was presented yesterday to reporters in a press conference by AI Pilipinas executive director Jessica Soto.

On the Philippine situation, the report said: "The number of attacks on leftist activists and community workers rose sharply, with at least 66 fatal shootings re-

KILLINGS/ A6

## Rapu-Rapu's local execs now want Lafayette to stay

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

**AERIAL VIEW of the Lafayette-owned processing facility in Rapu-Rapu, Albay, which yields ore, gold, copper and zinc.**

**By Blanche S. Rivera**
**and Bobby Q. Labalan**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

RAPU-RAPU, ALBAY—AFTER VOWING TO drive Lafayette Philippines Inc. out of this island town late last year, local officials are now singing a different tune.

In a surprising turnaround, the municipal council yesterday asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to allow the Australian mining firm to stay and extract Rapu-Rapu's mineral resources.

A council resolution, passed on May 8 and signed by eight of 10 members, was submitted by Councilor Marino Barranda Jr. to Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes yesterday.

It urged the DENR and the Pollution Adjudication Board to immediately allow the resumption of operations of the P1.4-billion Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic project, "subject to compliance with the requirements of the ... government for the protection of the environment and the people's health."

Reyes, along with officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and members of the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission (RRFFC), flew

RAPU-RAPU/ A21

**ON SITE at Rapu-Rapu: DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes.**

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/23/06

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iloilo/Bacolod | Cloudy with Rains |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Roxas | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Cloudy with Rains |
| Laoag | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Cloudy with Rains |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Gen. Santos | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tagaytay | Partly Cloudy | Zamboanga | Cloudy with Rains |
| Legazpi | Partly Cloudy | Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with Rains |
| Calapan | Partly Cloudy | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

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## 'UNPROGRAMMED FUNDS' IN BUDGET

# Senators to look at P57-B item

**BUDGET MAKERS:** Senator Manny Villar confers with Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and NEDA chief Romulo Neri on the national budget.

ROGER MARGALLO

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE WILL THOROUGHLY SCRUTINIZE the "unprogrammed funds" totaling P57 billion in the 2006 national budget to come up with a "prudent" outlay, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said yesterday.

"Normally, we review that. But we will review it more thoroughly now so we can be sure that we come up with a responsible budget. We'll watch out for both the unprogrammed and programmed funds," Villar told reporters.

In the House-approved P1.04-trillion budget, unprogrammed funds totaled P57.1 billion. These are funds that are on standby for emergency purposes.

Villar, who sponsored the budget measure on the floor last Monday in which the Senate recommended a P31-billion cut in the national outlay, said he expected the debates to last until next week.

The senators had earlier predicted the measure would be approved by Friday.

"I'm confident we will nail it next week. In fact, I wanted the debates to be finished this week. If not, the debates might extend until Monday, but not beyond Monday," Villar, chair of the committee on finance, said.

Villar did not discount the possibility that budget items the Senate deleted—the P13.1-billion compensation adjustment fund and the P10-billion incentive package for employees availing of the rationalization program—would be restored at the bicameral conference.

The compensation adjustment fund was deleted since a measure for the purpose had been passed by the House. The incentive package, on the other hand, was cut because the rationalization program has not been implemented.

"The chances are high [the cuts will be restored]," Villar said.

Apart from the two items, the Senate also deleted the P3-billion Kilos Asenso Fund and the P3.69-billion Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund, both believed to be "slush funds."

The Kilos Asenso fund is the administration's counterpart fund for local government projects, while the Kalayaan fund would cover livelihood and infrastructure projects in conflict areas.

The Senate also cut P2.721 billion for airports and navigational facilities from the budget of the Department of Transportation and Communications.

And, to punish the Presidential Commission on Good Government for snubbing committee hearings, the Senate deleted the P65.534-million budget of the PCGG.

Administration Sen. Ralph Recto, for his part, proposed that the Senate use part of the P31-billion cut for the internal revenue allotments (IRA) of the local government units amounting to P17.5 billion.

"The LGUs are victims of double jeopardy. First, their IRA was illegally held. And when this was finally released to them, a deduction was made instead of paying them interest as a way of saying 'we are sorry,'" Recto said in a statement.

The LGUs stood to get some P10 billion in IRA in 2000, but this was placed under unprogrammed funds in the national budget. This doubled to P20 billion the following year when the budget was reenacted.

Prior to the IRA "monetization" program, the Arroyo administration released some P2.5 billion in impounded IRA funds to the LGUs, according to Recto.

The Supreme Court later ruled that setting aside part of the IRA was unconstitutional. The Department of Justice, in an opinion last year, said the remaining P17.5 billion should be released to the LGUs.

## Palace: P31-B cut to affect pro-poor projects

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG SAID YESTERDAY the P31-billion cut in the 2006 national budget proposed by the Senate would hamstring its pro-poor programs meant to bring the gains of the recent tax increases to the masses.

"We welcome the final steps being taken by the Senate in approving the national budget, as well as the assurance of additional allowances for our government employees proposed by the executive [branch]. However, we ask for reasoned consideration of reported budget cuts as these may prejudice grassroots programs," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a briefing.

The Senate committee on finance slashed the proposed P1-trillion national budget this year by over P31 billion—P3 billion for the Kilos Asenso Support Fund; P3.7 billion for the Kalayaan Barangay program; P13.1 billion in the compensation adjustment fund; the P10 billion incentive package for early retirees in government, and P2.72 billion worth of projects of the Department of Transportation and Communication—as well as the P65.3 million budget of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

In turn, the committee approved a P600-million hike in the allocations for the Department of Health, Commission on Higher Education, University of the Philippines, and the agriculture and fisheries modernization program.

Bunye said the cut items should be restored because "we want the effects of fiscal reforms brought down to the constituencies, specifically the poor."

He said Malacañang remained optimistic the senators would take a "second look" at the cuts and see the budget as a showcase of an executive-legislative alliance for social justice and economic performance.

Bunye said it was still too early to assess the 2006 budget.

"It's a matter of give and take even after the Senate had [come up with] a final version because it will still be subject to the bicameral conference," he said.

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## Arroyo to visit Spain

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is set to leave for Spain next month to look for job opportunities for Filipinos, unmindful of the intent of opposition lawmakers to file another impeachment case by July.

The President announced she was planning a trip to Spain in a speech she delivered at the 27th National Conference of Employers at the Manila Hotel.

Talking about new markets for overseas employment, Ms Arroyo said she would go to Spain at the end of June to check out Spain's labor market.

"Spain's labor market will hopefully open for 100,000 of our workers in the next two years," she said.

"I also hope to be able to get Spain to [invest in tourism in] the Philippines," she added.

In her speech, the President also talked about job opportunities for Filipinos in Canada's provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

These three Canadian provinces were seeking labor agreements with the Philippines, she said, noting that this could include "temporary migration with an option for permanent settlement."

# Gringo, 6 others placed on hold-departure list on coup raps

FORMER SEN. GREGORIO Honasan and six other people, mostly retired military colleagues and members of his Senate staff, have been placed on the Bureau of Immigration's hold-departure list for their alleged participation in the failed Oakwood mutiny in 2003, the bureau announced yesterday.

It identified the retired military officers on the list of people barred from leaving the country as Colonels Ernesto Macahiya, Virgilio Briones, and Romeo Lazo and Capt. Felix Turingan. The members of Honasan's Senate staff put on the same list were George Duldulao and Lina Reyes.

All are at large.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. issued the hold-departure order against Honasan and the others on Friday in compliance with an April 28 directive from Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Oscar Pimentel, who is handling the coup d'etat charge against them.

They were formally charged last Feb. 25. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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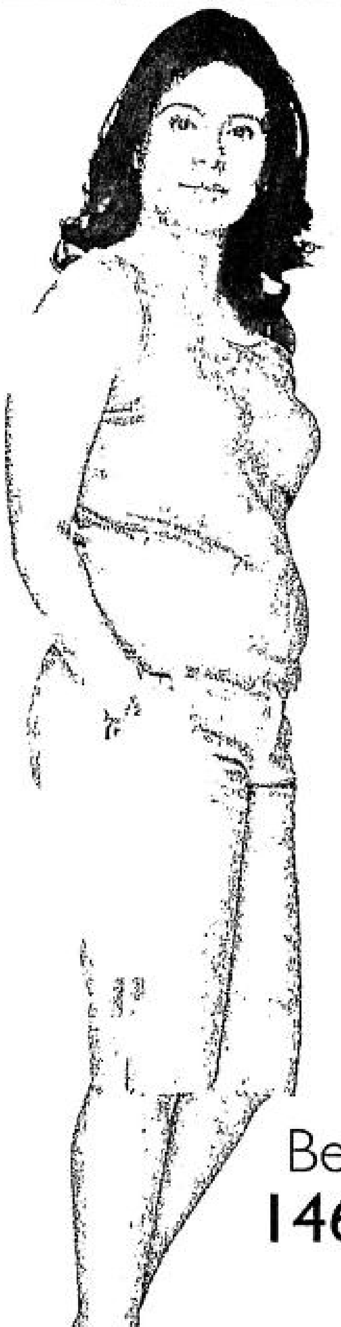

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# GMA: I'll take RP to 'Enchanted Kingdom' of First World

From page A1

pealed for a wage increase for workers with the country's biggest employers' group, Employers Confederation of the Philippines president Rene Soriano gently let her down, saying the group did not think a wage hike would be wise at this time.

"I reiterate the support I expressed on Labor Day for a reasonable wage hike hammered out by the tripartite regional wage boards in such a way that there will be no surprises insofar as business costs are concerned," the President said, renewing the appeal she first made on May 1.

Soriano said it was Ecop's position that a wage adjustment now would just drive up the prices of commodities.

"The best [way] is just to maybe wait for sometime, let's see the effect..." Soriano told reporters.

## Wage hike untimely

He said there was also a need to protect the four million unemployed who would suffer the most if prices of goods went up.

But Soriano said Ecop would definitely participate in the wage board meetings to discuss wage hike petitions.

"We will argue in the public hearings that there is at this time no need for an adjustment because we think it is not timely, we think it's inflationary, we think it will result in further uncompetitiveness of Philippine products in the domestic and world markets. We think it's not good for the country as a whole," he said.

Indeed, the conference resolutions that the employers drew up and presented to the President made no mention of a wage hike.

But the employers said they would seek to create decent jobs, flexible and competitive labor markets, and improve the ratio between the demand for jobs and the supply of skills, among other things.

## Fewer strikes

In her speech, Ms Arroyo also congratulated employer and labor groups, proudly noting that the country now had "the lowest strikes in Philippine history."

## Zero reason for strikes

"We are also pushing for conciliation and mediation as an alternative to arbitration," she told the employers.

The President said the Department of Labor and Employment recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Archdiocese of Manila "so that Catholic schools and hospitals, among others, will attempt to settle labor disputes first before cases are filed."

This would lessen the number of disputes going to arbitration and would help clean up the government's case dockets, she said.

The President suggested that Ecop come up with similar agreements with the DOLE and with local government units.

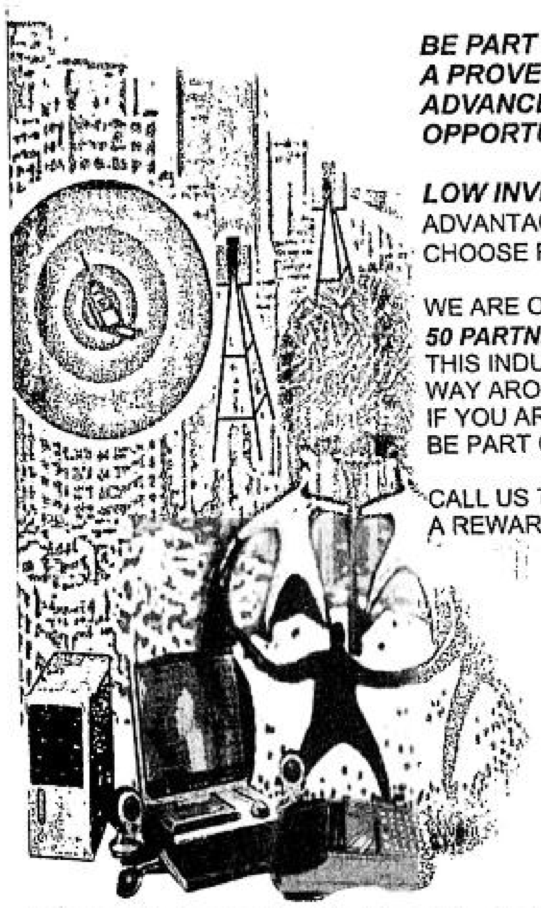
"Our goal is to have a zero reason to have strikes by the end of my term in 2010," she said.

Sto. Tomas told reporters that the government's goal of a zero-strike record in 2010 was "doable," noting that strikes were in decline.

From a record high of 531 in 1986, the number of strikes remained in the three-digit figures until 1993, Sto. Tomas said.

In 2000, strikes numbered only 60, declining to 43 in 2001, 36 in 2002, 28 in 2003, 24 in 2004 and 22 last year.

The labor secretary attributed the decline to the fact that the "conciliatory machinery was working."



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# Bilibid or not: Munti cops, teachers to get dream homes

## Corrections

IN THE MAY 17 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"Magdalo trial: Another witness links Gringo, but..."—misstated the name of a defense lawyer in the trial of the accused Oakwood mutineers. The lawyer's name is Theodore Te—not Theodore Te Roel.

* * *

IN THE MAY 19 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Third Filipino climber on track for 1-2-3 finish"—misspelled the name of North America's tallest peak. The highest mountain in North America is Mt. Denali—not Denale. Situated in Alaska, Mt. Denali is the native name for Mt. McKinley.

* * *

IN THE MAY 22 ISSUE, an In the Know article on Page A23—"What went before"—misspelled the first name of a Philippine president. The President's name is Diosdado—not Disodado—Macapagal.

* * *

*Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.*

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From page A1

Prisons (NBP) compound.

Muntinlupa City announced recently that a low-cost housing project for its employees had been allotted in the master plan for the development of the NBP Reservation Area in Barangay Poblacion.

Of the 416-hectare "disposable" land in the compound, Metro Manila Urban Services for the Poor (MMUSP) consultants had proposed that 12.5 hectares be allocated to some 1,500 of the city's public school teachers, policemen and other local government employees in the low income bracket, said Noel Cardona, head of the city's Urban Poor Affairs Office.

"But we have not yet really established the beneficiaries. A technical working group will conduct a survey to identify them," Cardona told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

## Also for squatters

The proposal includes the construction of a three- or four-story building in the allocated 12.5 hectares. The building, to be comprised of 1,500 units, would house some "qualified" informal settlers from the Philippine National Railways site.

Another 50 hectares of the 416 hectares had been previously designated for a separate socialized housing project for the 10,500 families displaced by the South Rail project, Cardona said.

One-third of the property would be developed into a commercial area. Public markets and other business establishments would be constructed to make the future neighborhood a "self-sustaining" community.

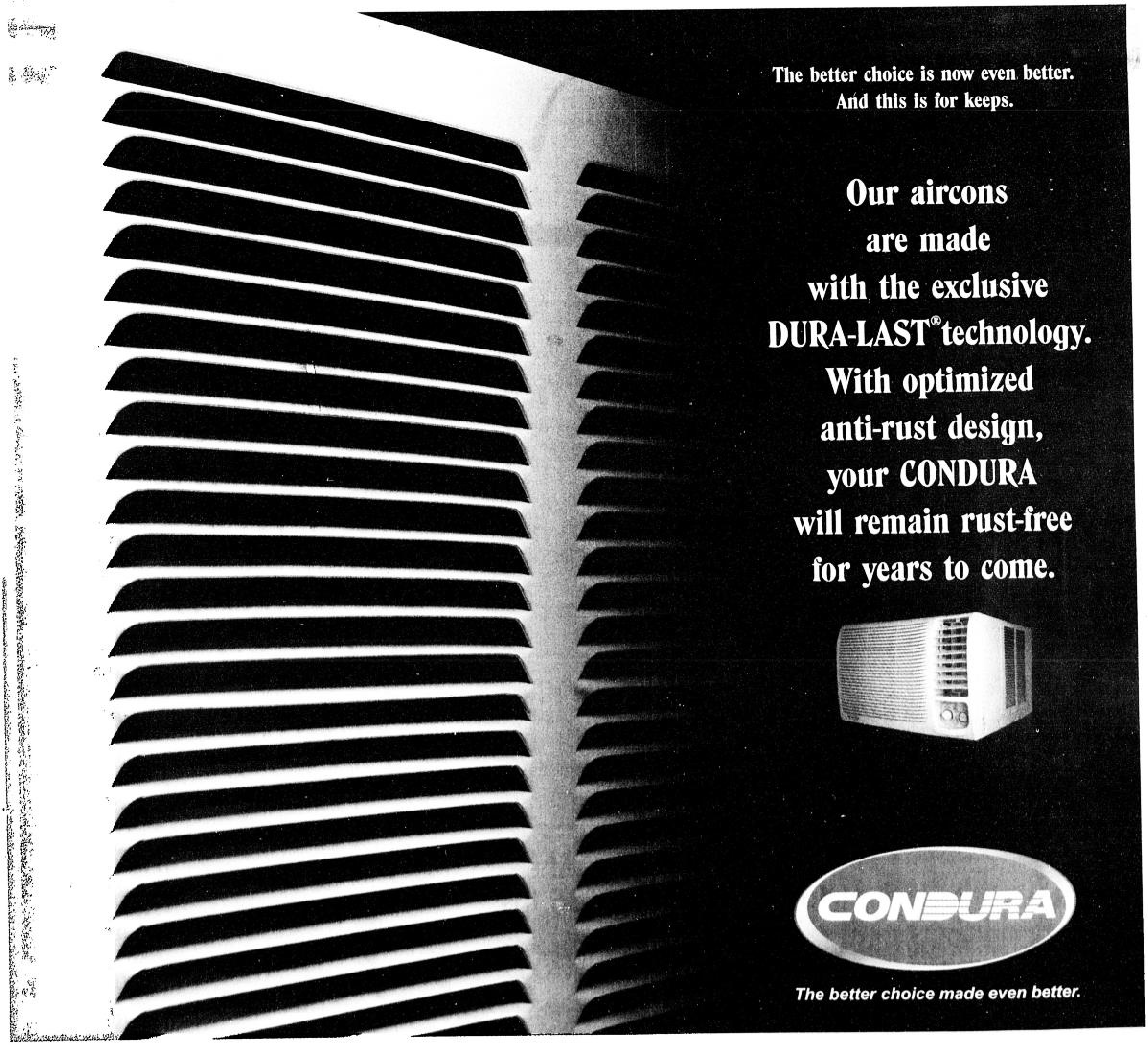
The rest of the property, about 200 hectares, would be for future government buildings and other infrastructure, Cardona said.

## Carefully planned

Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi welcomed the plan and urged local government employees to be extra patient, saying the project was carefully being planned with them in mind.

The local housing board was scheduled to meet with the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council next week to prepare the census of target beneficiaries, Cardona said.

The local board is composed of representatives from the local government, the National Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Philippine Business for Social Progress and the Muntinlupa Development Fund.



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# 4 senators deny having presidential aspirations

**By Juliet Labog-Javellana**

WHO, ME? OF COURSE NOT.

Four senators strongly suspected of harboring secret ambitions to run for President in 2010 yesterday brushed off a challenge from Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago that presidential aspirants declare their intention now so people will know and understand how they stand on the Charter change debate.

Though Santiago did not name the four senators with such plans, it is believed that Senators Manuel Villar, Ralph Recto, Manuel Roxas and Francis Pangilinan have been largely using their tenure at the Senate as preparation for higher office.

"Are we still going to have a President in 2010?," Villar shot back when asked if he was aiming for Malacañang in 2010.

With the administration and the majority coalition in Congress bent on a shift to a parliamentary system through a constitutional amendment, the presidential elections in 2010 may just not happen.

In any case, Villar, the country's wealthiest senator with a net worth of P760 million in 2005, said he had no plans to run for President and was only thinking of getting reelected in 2007, "if the Senate still exists" next year.

It would be "useless" for presidential aspirants to declare now because nobody knows what would happen in the political landscape in the next few years, he said.

Recto, the second richest senator after Villar, categorically said he would not run for President.

"I have no interest whatsoever. Anything higher than this [Senate] is a gift of [God's] grace. You can possibly plan up to the Senate but anything higher, you cannot plan," said the former Batangas congressman who is married to the popular movie star cum politician Vilma Santos, the mayor of Lipa City.

"My grandpa Don Claro could have been a great President. He was definitely a more intellectual person than I am and so is my father. But if the two of them did not become President, how much more can I?" he said.

Recto is the grandson of the eminent nationalist and senator Claro M. Recto, whose presidential candidacy was frustrated in 1957, and the son of Rafael Recto, a former assemblyman in the Marcos-era Batasan Pambansa.

Roxas, scion of the wealthy Roxas-Araneta clan, described the prospect of running for President in 2010 as a "nightmare."

A former congressman and trade secretary, Roxas made history as the candidate to have obtained the highest votes in any Philippine election. He got more than 19 million votes when he ran for the Senate in 2004.

Pangilinan quipped that he would run for president..."of Frankie's Parents-Teachers Association." Frankie is his eldest daughter with another popular movie star Sharon Cuneta.

"We aren't suffering from a shortage of overly ambitious politicians and so I prefer not to add to the excess supply," Pangilinan said.

Though they do not see the shift to a parliamentary system as happening anytime soon, Villar and Recto have made plans to run for parliament in their old districts in Las Piñas and Batangas, respectively.

But the shift to a parliamentary system would be an "uphill battle" for its advocates, said Recto who wants to run for reelection in 2007 but figures it would cost a lot of money.

He said running for MP (member of parliament) would be cheaper and easier by comparison.

"I think I can easily win in my district," he said.

Recto, who declared a net worth of P267.3 million, explained that it was his wife's money, not his.

"It's my wife who is rich. She has many commercials, if you notice," he said.

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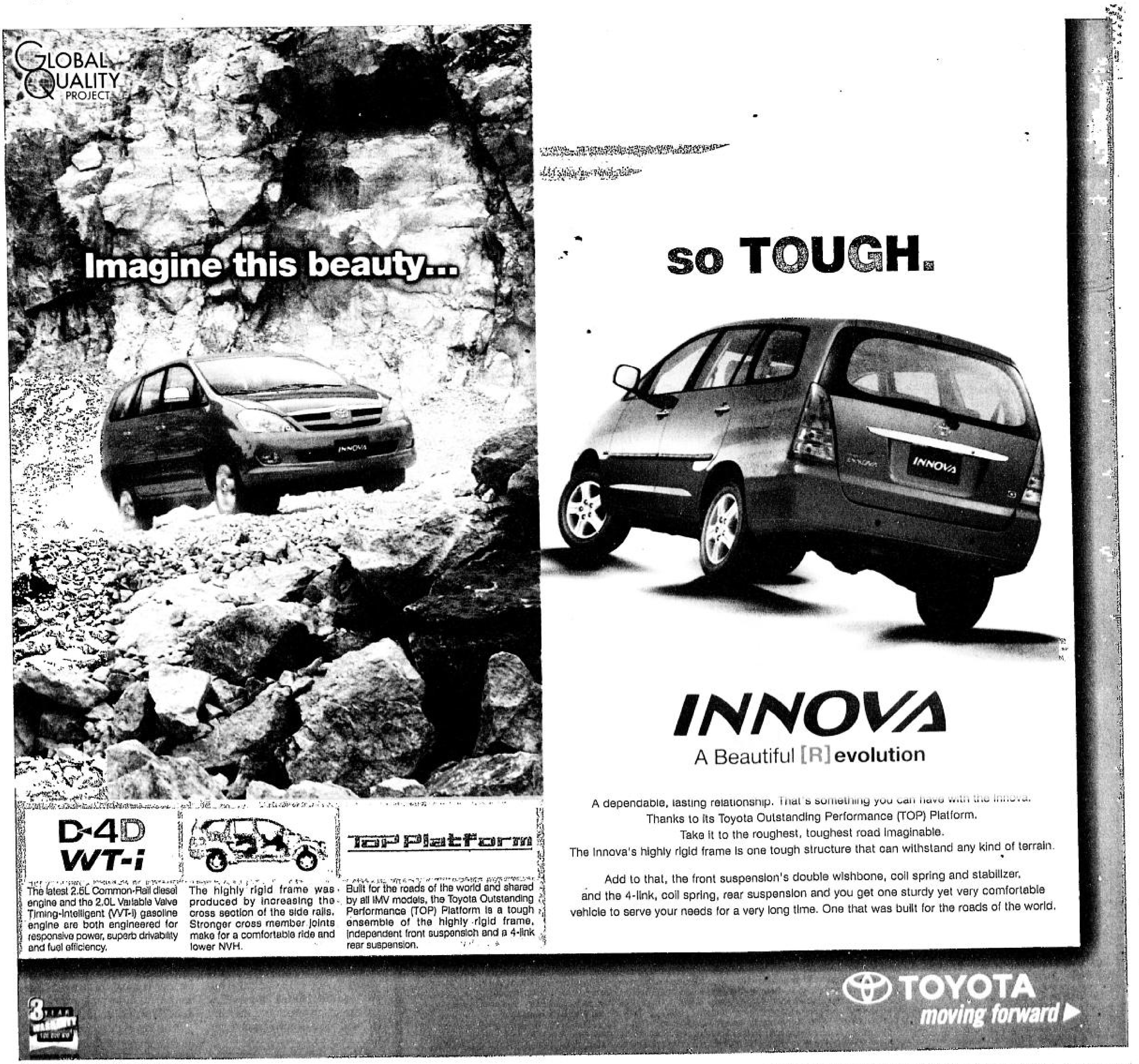

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# Killings alarm international group

From page A1

ported in 2005.

"A climate of impunity shielding the perpetrators of such killings deepened as ineffective investigations failed to lead to the prosecution of those responsible. In many cases witnesses were reportedly too frightened to testify."

The release of the report comes in the wake of the statement of the Commission on Human Rights that the Arroyo administration was accountable for the killing of activists and journalists, whether or not persons in authority were responsible.

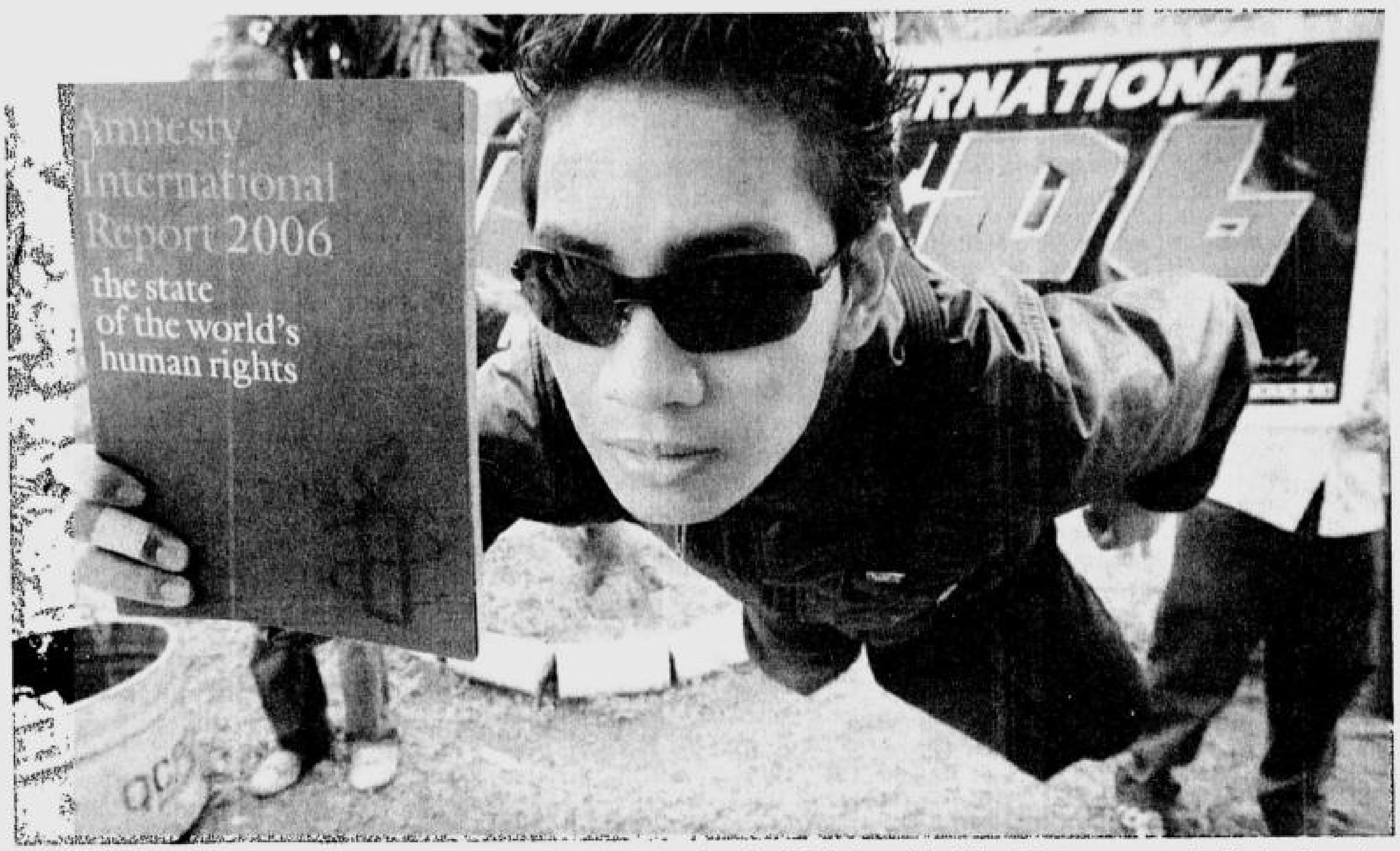
## Most at risk

The AI report said that apart from suspected members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, "those most at risk included members of legal leftist political parties, including Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, other human rights and community activists, priests, church workers and lawyers regarded by the authorities as sympathetic to the broader communist movement."

It observed that the military's labeling of activists in legal organizations as communists was one of the factors in the rise of the number of assassinations: "Increased killings in particular provinces were reportedly linked to the public labeling of leftist groups as NPA front organizations by local AFP commanders."

## Palparan

Asked if the Arroyo administration might be encouraging more extrajudicial killings in the countryside with Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan's recent promotion, the AI's Soto said: "Yes, I can only agree with that."



**GRIM STATISTICS** on human rights abuses not only in the Philippines but also in Britain and the United States are contained in the Amnesty International 2006 report, which was presented to the media in Quezon City on Tuesday. JOAN BONDOC

She said that despite the killing of leftist activists in Palparan's areas of jurisdiction, "you see the government giving support to him."

"This is an indication that the government is not serious in resolving these cases," she said.

Leftist groups have accused Palparan, commanding officer of Army troops in Central Luzon, of involvement in the killing of suspected rebels wherever he is assigned.

Palparan recently called for the reimposition of the antisubversion law to speed up the government's counterinsurgency campaign.

## Helping the CHR

He said CPP leaders had managed to infiltrate certain party-list groups that were "legal" but were involved in "illegal activities."

Soto said Amnesty International would assist the CHR in bringing the Philippine situation to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

"Perhaps they can send a special rapporteur ... What we'll do is keep on writing [letters to the UNHRC] until the human rights violations in the country stop," she said.

Soto also noted that the CHR had become outspoken on the human rights situation in the country: "Before, the CHR would not make statements on the government's human rights record. Now, [it's] making a strong statement."

On Monday, CHR Chair Purificiacion Quisumbing said the government was answerable for all the unsolved killings of activists.

She said it was the government's responsibility to ensure the people's right to life, property, privacy, security of homes and public order.

## 'Job for PNP'

But the military and police yesterday refused to take responsibility for the unabated killings.

"Well, in the first place this is the job of the Philippine National Police. These are criminal acts that fall under the jurisdiction of the PNP," said AFP Public Information Office chief Col. Tristan Kison.

He added: "If there are people within our ranks who would be charged, we are ready to surrender them to the [PNP] for investigation.

"If we have a way of knowing [the perpetrators], we will help in resolving this problem as soon as possible."

PNP Director Emmanuel Carta, officer in charge of Task Force Usig which was formed to solve the killings, said it was exerting its "best efforts."

Carta said it was "unfair" to say that the PNP was not doing enough regarding the killings.

"There are other pillars of the criminal justice system. I don't think we should blame each other. We should work hard on this," Carta said.

"We are exerting our best efforts to gather evidence ... But what we need is for witnesses to come out," he said.

Carta said the task force was concentrating on its assigned job because no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo had given instructions to its head, PNP Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr.

Razon, the deputy police chief for operations, left on Monday on a five-day official trip to Britain.

## Assistance

Kison said the AFP was assisting Task Force Usig "in the form of intelligence sharing" to identify the killers.

"But who will we charge?" he said.

The AFP had earlier claimed that the fallen militants were likely killed by their comrades. "Well, we have maintained that this could be part of a purge by the other side," Kison said.

Asked if the military was undertaking a crackdown on perceived enemies of the state, he said: "Well, our crackdown would always be on the maintenance of peace and stability. Whether or not they are on the CPP-NPA side or the political opposition side, for as long as they are threats to peace and stability we will take the necessary action."

Renato Reyes Jr., secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, yesterday challenged the PNP to relieve the police commanders in areas where activists or journalists had been killed.

"They do that for car theft cases. They should all the more do so [where] political killings [are involved]," he said.

## 'Test case'

At the House, Deputy Minority Leader and Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo said the Arroyo administration should heed CHR Chair Quisumbing's call for government accountability in all political killings.

Ocampo said the killing of activists, mostly members of Bayan Muna, and the filing of fabricated charges against himself and the other party-list representatives collectively known as the "Batasan 5" showed that "the Left is being used as a test case on how to silence the entire nation whose overwhelming majority seeks the President's ouster."

He pointed out that the government was bound to uphold and protect the rights and freedoms of the people under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international human rights instruments and conventions that the Philippines had signed.

And yet, he said, "rabid anti-Left government, military and police officials have maliciously dubbed dissenters and activists as enemies of the state in a vain attempt to justify the continuing political killings."

According to Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano, hit squads are now operating in Metro Manila and other major urban centers as part of the counterinsurgency program.

"This annihilation campaign is clearly anchored in the Armed Forces' internal security operation plan Bantay Laya," Mariano said.

He said Bantay Laya had "a two-pronged target: The organized masses in the countryside and the legal progressive movement in the cities."

## 'Candidates for sainthood'

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Quisumbing would have to "be careful in making general statements" about the killings.

"The CHR, I think, always thinks that all the leftist people are candidates for sainthood, and that the government is always wrong," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

"I think the CHR should be more [open-minded] in [its] assessment ... So many people are killed not because of their being leftist or rightist or media ..." he said.

Gonzalez reiterated his challenge to the CHR, leftist groups and international organizations to help the government get to the bottom of the communist purges of the 1980s.

"Why don't we work together to find out who was responsible for the common graves in Quezon? Who did it and why was it done?" he said, adding:

"Human rights groups should look into these things. We are criticized abroad for these killings. The government is being blamed, but what about their (the leftists') own killings?" *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Armand N. Nocum and Christian V. Esguerra*

## *'Sherpas for truth'*

THE MILITANT FISHERFOLK group Pamalakaya said that along with the farmers' alliance Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, it would present to the Vatican's new ambassador to the Philippines the 601 cases of extrajudicial killings allegedly perpetrated by the military, police or their hired assassins from Jan. 21, 2001, to May 22, 2006.

Archbishop Fernando Filoni "deserves the truth and nothing but the truth," Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER.

"So we are willing to act as his Sherpas for truth. We will keep him posted and we will provide him alternative sources and viewpoints on current social issues," it said.

Pamalakaya and the KMP were apparently encouraged by Filoni's earlier statement that it was the Church's duty to speak out on issues.

"He is an open-minded and progressive leader of the Church and we are confident he will listen to us," said KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos. *Christian Esguerra*

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# Gonzales lying about mass graves, says Zubiri

From page A1

That's a lie," Zubiri, chair of the Northern Mindanao Peace and Order Council, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Citing a military report, Gonzales earlier said the New People's Army, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, carried out 11 killings in San Fernando town and another seven in Quezon town.

During his stint in the Regional Peace and Order Council the past five years, Zubiri said he never received reports of mass graves in the province. The military, according to the governor, had recovered only two bodies in Bukidnon—one in 2001 and the other in 2005.

"I don't know his agenda but definitely we won't allow him (Gonzales) to use Bukidnon for whatever agenda he has," said Zubiri whose son, Juan Miguel, is the representative of the third congressional district of Bukidnon.

The national security adviser earlier said the NPA killings in Bukidnon proved that the wave of murders of unarmed leftist activists across the country was part of an ongoing internal purge in the communist movement.

## No comment

The INQUIRER sought Gonzales's comment on Zubiri's remarks. But members of Gonzales's staff said questions on the Bukidnon killings should be directed at military officials who furnished the national security adviser with the report.

After reading the INQUIRER report on Gonzales's claims of two communist mass graves in Bukidnon, Zubiri said he talked to Brig. Gen. Jose Barbieto, deputy commander of the 4th Infantry Division, who advised him to call up Col. Vic Morales, commander of the 403rd Brigade based in Malaybalay City.

Zubiri said Morales told him that Gonzales's report about the mass graves was not true.

"When we went to talk in my office, he (Morales) said: 'You know governor, I apologize for this. We were precisely telling the secretary, even discouraging him, that the report he received about mass graves in San Fernando was not true,'" the governor said.

Zubiri said Morales admitted to giving Gonzales a report. But the colonel told the governor that "the report does not say that there are killing fields in Bukidnon."

Gonzales had said that the 26th Infantry Battalion, which is under the 403rd Brigade, had documented at least 21 cases of summary executions by the NPA since 2002. Gonzales also cited other NPA "atrocities," including the recruitment of "child warriors" and the rape of a teenager by a rebel commander.

Gonzales had said the military report was based on the testimony of at least 12 witnesses.

## Surprise witness

But Zubiri said he was surprised to find out that one of the supposed witnesses was Jimmy Arion, the head of Barangay Kibongcog, where one of the mass graves was allegedly found.

"Arion is one of the top 10 barangay captain awardees in the province. He has delivered projects to his people. How come he has been alleged as a New People's Army executioner?" the governor said.

In a radio interview yesterday, Arion said Lt. Col. Benjamin Madrigal Jr., commander of the 26th IB based in Bukidnon, had forced him to admit that he was an NPA leader when the military brought him and seven others to the 4th ID headquarters in Cagayan de Oro City for a short talk with Gonzales on May 13.

"Madrigal told us that Secretary Gonzales wanted to meet us in Cagayan de Oro for a short talk, and then the relatives of the victims of the killings would receive relief goods from the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development)," Arion said.

## 'Coerced'

Arion said he was coerced into admitting to journalists that he was an NPA leader. He, however, refused to sign an affidavit.

"I didn't have a choice, especially since Lieutenant Colonel Madrigal sat beside me and told me to admit the allegations. I yielded but I decided not to sign any of those papers," Arion said.

Madrigal denied Arion's allegations.

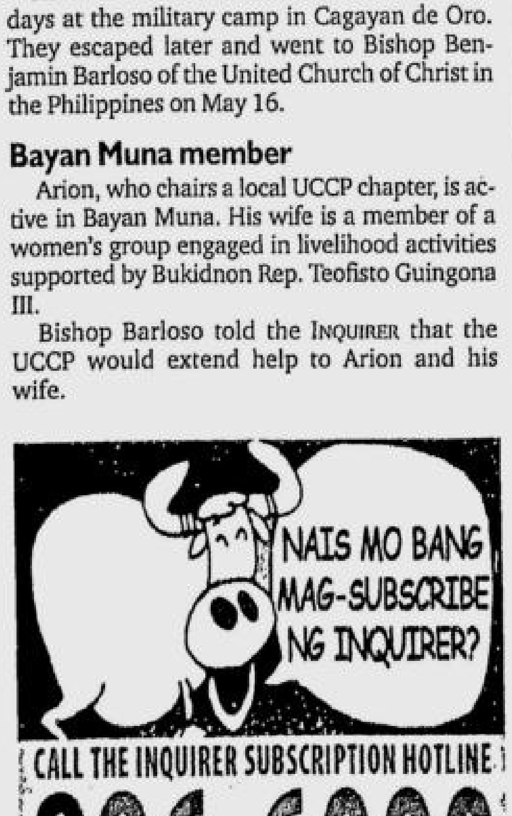
"They (witnesses) willfully joined us. In fact, some civilian lawyers spoke to them before they were presented to Secretary Gonzales," Madrigal said.

Arion and his wife Nena were held for three days at the military camp in Cagayan de Oro. They escaped later and went to Bishop Benjamin Barloso of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines on May 16.

## Bayan Muna member

Arion, who chairs a local UCCP chapter, is active in Bayan Muna. His wife is a member of a women's group engaged in livelihood activities supported by Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III.

Bishop Barloso told the INQUIRER that the UCCP would extend help to Arion and his wife.



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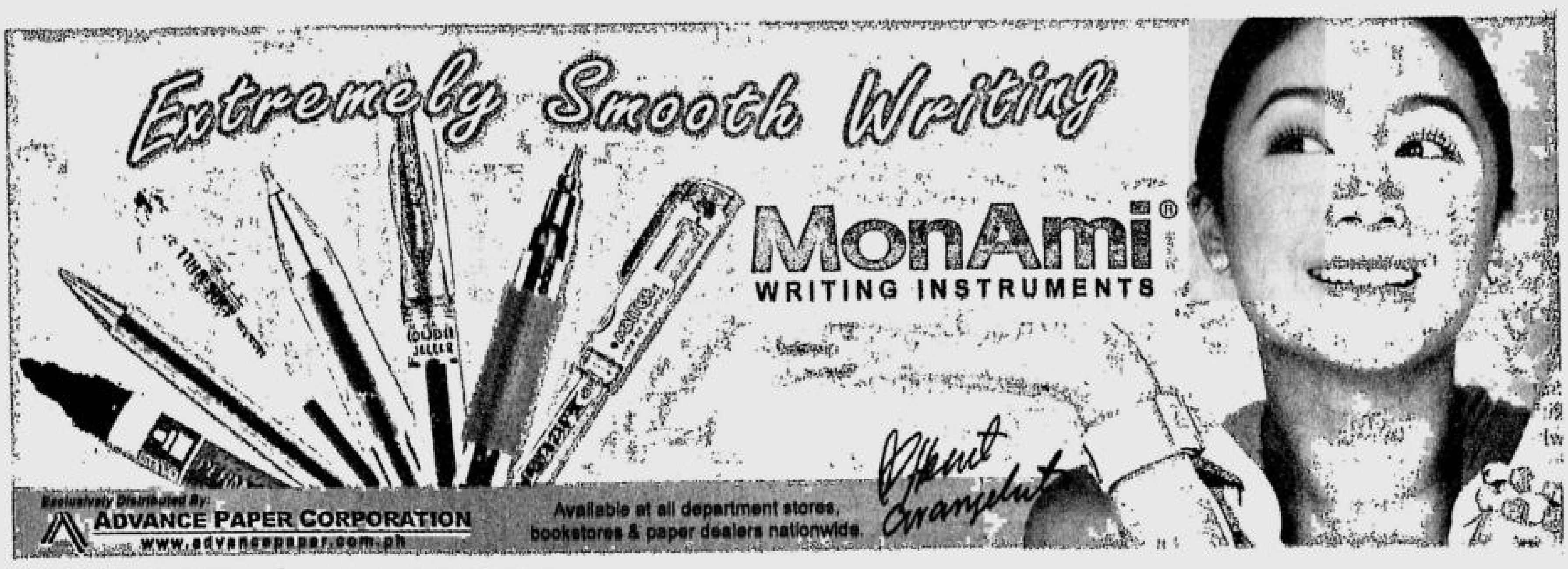

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# Cops find bike, gear of Palawan broadcaster's killers

**By Marlon Ramos and Jofelle P. Tesorio**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—The motorcycle and other items believed used by the killers of the most popular broadcaster in Palawan have been found, the regional director of the Mimaropa police said yesterday.

Chief Supt. Delfin Genio said the recovered items included a blue motorcycle, a blue collared shirt, black jogging pants, a cap, a towel and two bullets for a .45-cal. pistol.

He said the items could have belonged to the killers of Fernando "Dong" Batul, a hard-hitting commentator on local radio dyPR, on Monday morning in Puerto Princesa City.

Genio quoted an informer of the National Bureau of Investigation in Puerto Princesa as saying that "a group of civilians was trying to get hold" of some items found near a lumber yard along Malvar Street.

He said NBI and police agents went to the area and found the items scattered there.

## Reward

A former vice mayor of the city, Batul, the 79th journalist killed since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, was on his way to the radio station to host his "Bastonero" program when he was waylaid.

Genio said the reward for information leading to the arrest of Batul's killers was raised to P1 million with the provincial government of Palawan, through Gov. Joel Reyes, putting up P500,000 yesterday.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn had earlier offered the same amount for the quick resolution of the killing.

Genio said the P1-million reward would be a boost to police efforts to find the killers.

"Hopefully, the bounty will motivate witnesses to come out and cooperate with our investigators," he told the INQUIRER.

Genio said his team already had a witness who was standing a few feet from where Batul was ambushed.

He called on Batul's friends and relatives as well as local residents to cooperate with police investigators.

## Artist's sketch

In Puerto Princesa, police released an artist's sketch of one of the killers.

Gen. Isidro Lapeña, who had been assigned by Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao to look into the case, said copies of the sketch based on an eyewitness account would be issued shortly to the media.

Lapeña said he had met with the management of dyPR station and turned over financial assistance in behalf of the PNP to the mother and siblings of Batul, who would have turned 37 today.

The provincial government condemned the brutal killing, saying it was an attack on press freedom as well as on Palawan.

## Motive

"It was scary because we knew the reason he was killed—to silence him forever," said Vice Gov. David Ponce de Leon.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, Palawan Community and Media Council and Palawan NGO Network Inc. also issued statements condemning the killing of the broadcaster.

**BATUL:** Most popular broadcaster in Palawan

# Government to allow journalists to bear arms

From page A1

sure of the reason. There are media men killed in drinking sprees or because of a woman. So what does that have to do with their work?" he said.

## Doing its best

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said he was open to the proposal to arm journalists, on condition that they underwent proper training and obtained the required permits.

But he said the administration would not take responsibility for the rash of killings involving journalists and activists because it had done its best to prevent more murders and solve pending cases.

"We're not satisfied [with our record] and we prefer that the culprits be brought to justice and put behind bars," Bunye said at a briefing.

"But we have to work together instead of blaming one another. The citizenry will have to cooperate with the police and give proper information so cases will be solved fast," he said.

Bunye was reacting to the statement on Monday by Commission on Human Rights Chair Purifacion Quisumbing that the government should be held accountable for the extrajudicial killings that had occurred under the watch of President Macapagal-Arroyo. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

"Our President upholds human rights and she does not condone ... any violations. The President has come out very strongly in condemning such violations, and has ordered authorities to step up their investigation on the series of killings," he said.

Reminded that this was Ms Arroyo's same response in the past to the public alarm over the growing number of extrajudicial killings, Bunye said: "These cases are being filed, and as long as perpetrators are identified, they are filed in court. It just so happens that for some cases, the culprits are still at large. That's why we are appealing for assistance to bring the culprits to justice."

**ROTTING TOMATOES** from Southern Tagalog militants who earlier picketed Camp Aguinaldo are thrown at the office of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency in Quezon City to protest the sharp rise in the killings of militants and journalists. RAFFY LERMA

## Press freedom fund

Bunye said he would look into the press freedom fund established by Ms Arroyo last year to determine whether it had been used to achieve its purpose of giving incentives to informers and providing relief to relatives of the victims.

He stressed that the administration did not relish the Philippines being called the most dangerous place for journalists after war-torn Iraq.

"We hope that we will be able to get the cooperation of everyone so the situation will improve," Bunye said, adding:

"Things would look brighter if the solution of cases would be speeded up. We are appealing for the cooperation of everyone because we need information to push through with the investigations, information that only the citizenry can provide."

Gonzalez also said the government had "solved almost all the media killings, and we have charged as [many people] as [the cases] we have solved."

"The government has not been remiss in protecting members of the media," he said.

But he said members of the media "should police their own ranks."

He added: "The problem is there are many 'hao siao' reporters. I experienced that in Congress before.

"There were many media men who were not allowed to join their colleagues in the press office because they were not legitimate media men. They only asked for money."

## Abnormal series

Gonzalez represented Iloilo in Congress for three terms.

At the Bulong Pulungan forum, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno noted that despite the creation of Task Force Usig to go after the perpetrators, the killings continued.

"I felt it constituted an abnormal series of occurrences. A murder was happening almost every day since the task force was created," Puno said.

"We're going to examine what form of protection we can give to journalists," he said, adding that he would discuss with representatives of media groups "matters concerning enforcement of laws and prosecution of suspects, the protection of journalists and the prevention of harm to them."

He said he would likewise meet with the CHR to talk about ways and means to ensure that the human rights of activists and journalists were protected.

"We do not condone extrajudicial killings," Puno said.

He also said the police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the National Bureau of Investigation would handle the probe into the killing of broadcaster Fernando "Dong" Batul the other day in Palawan. *(See story at the top of this page.)*

## Eyewitnesses

Puno stressed the importance of the participation of the community, especially the eyewitnesses, in solving the killings.

"Investigators are hard put to solve any crime unless people help. We're trying to [create] a climate where witnesses can feel safer," he said.

He also said the participation of civic groups and business organizations in crime prevention was crucial, and added that this was why he had decided to seek their help in manning 22 chokepoints in Metro Manila.

The chokepoints are where permanent police outposts will be set up to inspect vehicles and ensure public order.

There will also be mobile checkpoints to go after suspicious vehicles.

## Civic groups

Puno said in a statement that he would seek the assistance of groups like the Rotary Club, Kiwanis and Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce in carrying out crime prevention programs.

He said that it was important for the public to have confidence when approaching police officials at chokepoints and checkpoints, and that the presence of civic group members would be reassuring. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

# I just wanted to have fun, says Abcede

From page A1

with the Marcoses that could lead to the dropping of more than 500 ill-gotten wealth cases against them in exchange for returning part of the money.

## No big deal

"I don't know why people are making a big thing out of it. On my part, I just wanted to have fun with friends. It was a party, not politics," Abcede said in a press conference yesterday.

The party was held at Abcede's new condominium in Makati City to celebrate his 59th birthday. His actual birthday was on May 17. He moved into the new unit after his house in Pasay City burned down last April.

"That's why it's an amicable settlement, I have to be amicable with them (Marcoses). I am negotiating from a position of strength but I would also like them to be in the proper frame of mind so they will be open to a compromise," Abcede said.

He added that he invited Marcos because "I don't consider her my enemy. It's my party and I can invite anyone I want. But I can't invite my enemies."

## Compromise welcome

In the same press conference, PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio said that the Supreme Court had already issued a number of decisions saying that any compromise in the civil cases was "encouraged."

"This policy is not initiated by the PCGG. It is already in the law and clarified by the Supreme Court. While full recovery is ideal under the mandate of the PCGG, the agency must make concessions to expedite the recovery. The PCGG should not be faulted, it is only following the law," Sabio said.

He added that there was no ruling by the Supreme Court that prohibited the government from entering into a compromise with the Marcoses.

Sabio also exhorted critics of the deal to "wait for an agreement to be crafted" before criticizing it. Besides, he said, the commission would have to deliberate on the finished product before it would be submitted to the courts for final approval.

**ABCEDE:** Friends, not enemies.

**SABIO:** Concessions for recovery

## House decision

The PCGG chair also said he would leave the decision to abolish the PCGG "to the statesmanship of the House of Representatives and the Senate."

"We have a mandate. If it is abolished, how can we accomplish it? But what can we do? That's their (lawmakers') call," Sabio said.

Lawmakers and other parties had called for the abolition of the PCGG for two reasons: It was ineffective in going after ill-gotten wealth cases and its commissioners were allegedly taking advantage of their positions to enrich themselves and to negotiate a deal with the Marcoses. Recently, some senators even called for a zero budget for the PCGG.

"The effect of that (zero budget) is that it is giving us a responsibility but not enough equipment to carry this out. It's as simple as that. But we will do our best. For as long as I am here, I will pursue these [ill-gotten wealth] cases," Sabio said.

He added that the PCGG would prefer to enter into deals with the Marcoses and their cronies rather than let litigation drag on.

## Steal now, (no) pay later

Abcede also allayed fears that a settlement with the Marcoses would encourage other government officials to steal now and seek a compromise with the government later.

"It doesn't mean we are encouraging future leaders to commit acts inimical to government. It's like saying the government is wrong in negotiating with the MILF and the communist rebels. Is it to encourage them to commit more acts of terrorism? We don't want that," he said.

On accusations that the money recovered from the Marcoses would be used to fund Charter change, Abcede said proponents of this argument "are all sound and fury and signify nothing."

"Our mandate is to recover the ill-gotten wealth and remit this to the national treasury for CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program). Maybe they (critics) should monitor where the money goes. But don't look at us. They are barking up the wrong tree," he said.

Asked to comment on various calls for the resignation of Sabio and the other PCGG commissioners, Abcede said: "If their reasons are valid, why not? Otherwise the President will have to decide."

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# NorthRail head admits Joe de V role in project

**By TJ Burgonio**

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA HOSTED MEETings between government officials and representatives of the Chinese Embassy on the long-delayed and controversial $503-million Northrail transit system at his home in Makati at least two times early this year.

Jose Cortes, president of the North Luzon Railway Corp. (Northrail), admitted this much yesterday when he appeared for the first time before the Senate, nearly eight months after snubbing its inquiry into the controversial project.

By his admission, Cortes bolstered speculation that De Venecia had played a key role in the contract between Northrail and the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. Group (CNMEG) to build the project.

But he was quick to say the Speaker was not involved in the negotiations. Cortes said De Venecia merely "opened the doors" for the government to obtain funds from the Chinese government for the Northrail and other projects.

The 32-km railway project, which promises fast, cheap travel for thousands of commuters across congested areas from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan, has been bedeviled by false starts, and alleged anomalies.

At the Senate budget hearings, Cortes admitted he, Finance Secretary Peter Favila, other department heads and Philippine National Railway officials met twice with Chinese embassy officials at De Venecia's residence at Dasmariñas Village.

The meetings came two years after Northrail and CNMEG signed the contract in December 2003. Also present at the meetings was Chinese businessman William Go.

Opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III said he had information the project was the "baby" of De Venecia and wanted to know "why do we need a middle-man for a government to government project?"

## Opening doors

"We need JDV to open the doors," Cortes replied.

Cortes told reporters later that De Venecia simply helped the administration obtain funds from the Chinese government.

"The Speaker was never involved in the negotiations at all. All I was referring to was the fact that he opened the door to our ability to get funding facility, not only for Northrail, but for the other projects that we have in the Philippines..." he said. "He provided the venue."

Apart from the railway project, the other beneficiaries of Chinese funding were the Nonoc mining project in Surigao del Norte and other agriculture-based projects, he said. The Chinese government has allotted $6-billion fund to protect its investments in the country.

Under questioning by Senate President Franklin Drilon, who initiated a hearing into the Northrail project last year, Cortes admitted that Northrail had no franchise to build and operate a railway.

But this would be remedied by the establishment of a joint venture between Northrail and the PNR, Cortes said, conceding, however, that PNR's franchise was not transferrable.

"We are not against the project. We just don't want the government to be saddled with another Piatco. We must straighten this out," said Drilon, referring to the mothballed Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal III.

In a study released in August last year, the University of the Philippines Law Center claimed the contract between Northrail and CNMEG was "unlawful" because it skipped public bidding.

For this and other "questionable terms," the contract should be annulled, and if warranted, criminal, civil and administrative charges should be filed against concerned public and private individuals, the law center recommended.

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# Cha-cha faceoff: House, Senate panels to meet

By Michael Lim Ubac

A 19-MAN CONTINGENT FROM the House of Representatives will face off with a panel of senators tonight at the Manila Polo Club in an effort to reach agreement on how to go about Charter change.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said yesterday the House contingent would be meeting with the senators with an "open mind and [in] good faith."

Up for discussion are the proposed coming together of both chambers to amend the 1987 Constitution, the shift to a parliamentary system, the abolition of the Senate to pave the way for a unicameral parliament, the manner of voting, among other topics.

"We will discuss everything that concerns Cha-cha," said Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, who formed the House contingent to be composed of 15 pro-administration lawmakers and four members of the minority.

A disgruntled administration congressman, however, was quick to brand the House-Senate dialogue a pact with "the devil."

Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas, a committee vice chair, expressed skepticism the dialogue would produce "tangible results."

"How come we dialogue with the devil?" he said. "The Senate will not back an inch."

Cagas said the dialogue "would lead nowhere."

"The dialogue is a sure way to kill Cha-cha. Senators have been against the constituent assembly. My colleagues in the House should not fall into the trap set by the senators to use the dialogue to kill Cha-cha," Cagas said.

He urged the House instead to focus on the people's initiative to amend the Constitution, which he said had a greater chance of prospering.

The Senate, for its part, is not keen on Charter change but agreed to the dialogue with the House to thresh out their differences.

During a two-hour meeting of the House committee on constitutional amendments yesterday, Jaraula said that whatever would be agreed upon during the dialogue would only be recommendatory to both chambers of Congress.

And in line with Speaker De Venecia's "massage diplomacy"—the House's effort to restore "formal diplomatic relations" with the largely anti-Cha-cha Senate—the committee suspended deliberations on House Resolution No. 1230 (the draft amendments to the Constitution) to hear the senators' inputs first.

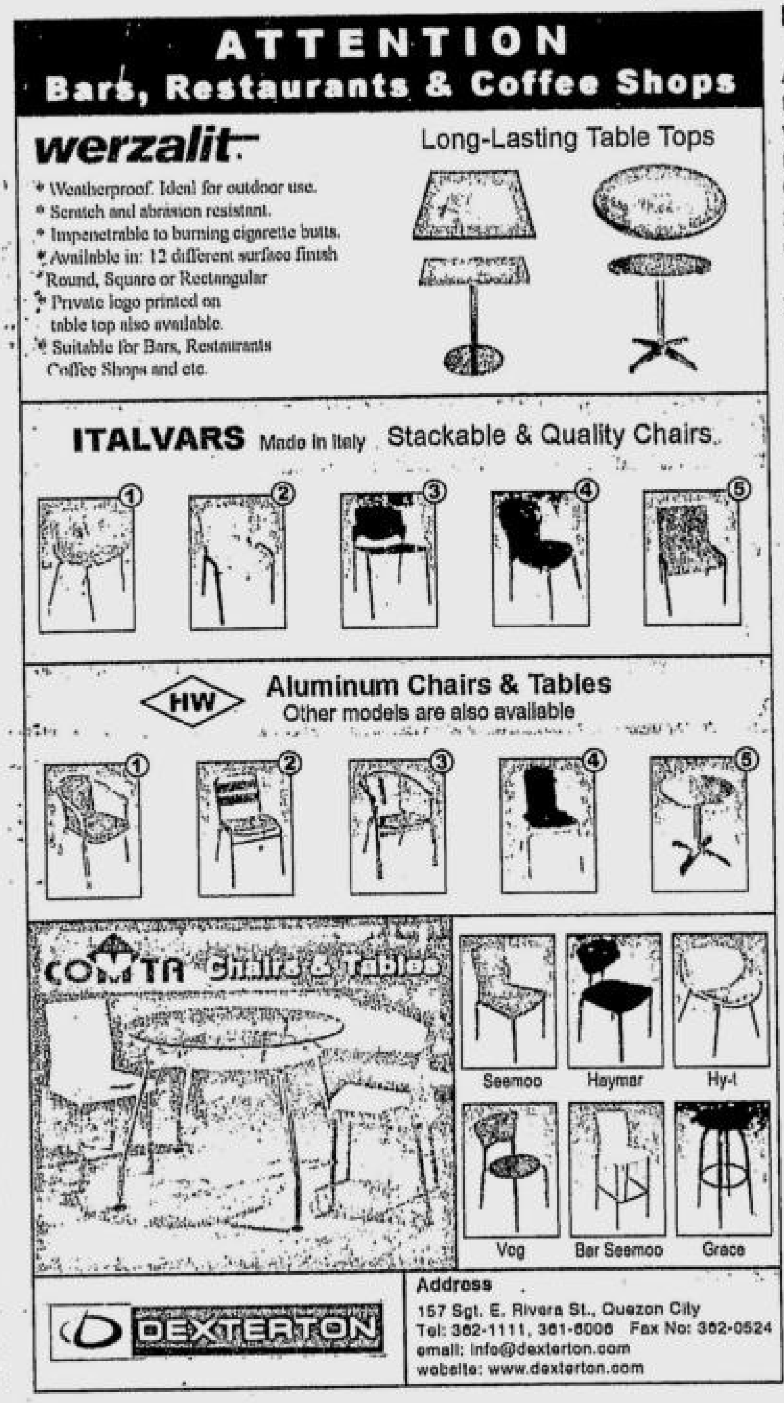
"Lawmakers cannot debate till kingdom come," said Jaraula, who was optimistic the senators would cooperate with the House push for a shift to a parliamentary system of government.

The House contingent is composed of, among others, Jaraula, Antonio Cuenco, Luis Villafuerte, Exequiel Javier, Mauricio Domogan, Salacnib Baterina, Roquito Ablan, Mary Ann Susano, Uliran Joaquin, Hermilando Mandanas, Victoria Reyes and Herminia Ramiro, and for the minority Darlene Antonino-Custodio and Roilo Golez.

Before the meeting adjourned, Jaraula read a letter from the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws informing the House that they were "ready to host and receive the House contingent for an open dialogue on the issues surrounding the proposed Charter change."

Jaraula stressed that while they were meeting with the senators, the "House will defend its stand for a shift from the current unitary bicameral presidential form of government to a unicameral parliamentary form at the soonest practicable time."

Villafuerte said Senate President Franklin Drilon had averred that the senators had "no fundamental objections to Charter change but they disagreed with the mode by which it would be carried out."



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Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking similar and related project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

| Activities | Schedule | Venue |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Issuance of Bid Documents | June 7 to 9, 2006<br>Wednesday to Friday<br>8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm | BAC Secretariat<br>Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD)<br>Rm. 201, Bldg. 255,<br>Barryman Road, SBFZ. |
| 2. Pre-Bid Conference | June 13, 2006<br>Tuesday<br>2:00 p.m. | PPMD Conference Room<br>Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD)<br>Rm. 201, Bldg. 255,<br>Barryman Road, SBFZ |
| 3. Submission/Opening of Bids | June 26, 2006<br>Monday<br>10.00 a.m. | Procurement and Property Management Dept. (PPMD)<br>Rm. 201, Bldg. 255,<br>Barryman Road, SBFZ |

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,500.00 to the SBMA Treasury Dept., Bldg. 229, Barryman Road, SBFZ.

"SBMA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract if there is *prima facie* evidence of collusion between appropriate public officers or employees of the agency, or between the BAC and any of the bidders, or if the collusion is between or among the bidders themselves, or between a bidder and a third party, including any act of which restricts, suppresses or nullifies or tends to restrict, suppress or nullify competition, or if the BAC is found to have failed to follow the prescribed bidding procedures, or for any justifiable and reasonable ground where the award of the contract will not redound to the benefit of the government" (R.A. 9184, Sec. 41).

(Sgd.) ATTY. JOCELYN G. ALVARADO
BAC Chairman

(PDI–May 24 & June 1, 2006)

# Pre-need firms back Pacific rehab program

PRE-NEED PLAN HOLDERS OF VARIOUS pre-need companies yesterday supported the decision of the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) for the rehabilitation of the ailing pre-need company, Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI).

In a statement, the Coordinating Alliance for Reform and Empowerment in the Pre-need Industry (CARE Pre-need), with 8,000 pre-need plan holders, described the court's decision as a reasonable, credible and workable solution to the problem of open-ended education plans, which PPI has stopped selling since the early '90s. This was long before the 2002 Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) order to stop the sale of this type of educational plan.

David Diwa Jr., the group's president, said the court-approved plan to resuscitate PPI would allow the company to continue its operations, improve its financial standing and help revive the pre-need industry.

This would also provide for a continuing tuition support for open-ended plan holders up to school year 2009-10.

He urged the SEC to grant PPI dealers' license and securities so they could sell fixed value pension plans, education plans and memorial plans.

"We are for the rehabilitation, not the demolition of PPI," Diwa said.

At the same time, Alfredo J. Non, president of PPI said that he was closely consulting and coordinating with Diwa as part of Care Pre-need and PPI's mutually-agreed policy to save and support the pre-need industry and protect the plan holders' interest.

Diwa cited PPI for responding to the need of plan holders for continued tuition fee support. Unlike other pre-need firms, PPI had given tuition fee support last school year that totaled P591 million.

"This gesture has given PPI's open-ended plan holders relief during these difficult times and has rekindled the trust and confidence that exist between PPI and its plan holders," he said.

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Province of Negros Oriental
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SPECIALIZED BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
www.bayawancity.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Bayawan through its Specialized Bids and Awards Committee, invites prospective suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following project.

| Bid Number | Name of Project/s | Approved Budget for the Contract | Source of Fund |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06-046B | Materials for the Installation of Power Lines for GK Socialized Housing | P2,784,359.00 | General Fund |
| 06-047B | Materials for Gawad Kalinga Multi-Purpose Bldg. (2-units) | P 1,293,500.00 | General Fund |
| 06-048B | Materials for GK Socialized Housing Scheme II - 200 units (Bahay Masaya Type | P 13,007,082.00 | General Fund |

Project Location/Delivery Area : Bayawan City Warehouse
Contract Duration : 12 working days upon receipt of Purchase Order

The complete schedules of bidding activities are as follows

| ACTIVITY | DATE/S |
|---|---|
| Advertisement/Posting of the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid | May 17 2006 |
| Issuance of Bid Documents | May 17 2006 |
| Pre-bid Conference | May 26, 2006 (1 30 p m) |
| Deadline for the submission & Opening of Eligibility Requirements (for Non-Accredited Suppliers) & LOI for Accredited Suppliers (Specialized BAC Office) | June 6, 2006 (2 00 p m) |
| Deadline/Opening of Bids (Specialized BAC Office) | June 7, 2006 (10 00 a m) |

Complete sets of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents will be available for issuance at the Specialized BAC Office, 2nd Floor City Hall Bldg., Bayawan City (Tel. (035) 531-0800) upon payment of the prescribed non-refundable fee.

Prospective [illegible] ders shall duly accomplish eligibility requireme[illegible], technical and financial proposals and submit the same in 2 (two) separate s[illegible] envelopes o[illegible] or before the date indicated ab[illegible]

[illegible] Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to accept or reject all bids or part thereof, to waive formality therein [illegible] bids considered most advantageous to the [illegible] Government of Bayawan

Atty VICTORIANO D. ALABASTRO
Chairman Specialized Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI May [illegible] & 24, 2006)

# Suspect in Kintanar, Tabara slays eyed as state witness

**By Dona Z. Pazzibugan**

THE MILITARY IS CONSIDERING TURNING a captured suspect in the killing of communist leaders Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar into a state witness.

"He is very cooperative. He is willing to help in locating the other members of his group," said Col. Tristan Kison, Armed Forces of the Philippines public information chief, of Delfin de Guzman, alleged Communist Party of the Philippines official who admitted involvement in the killing of the two.

De Guzman had supplied the military with the identities of his cohorts, Kison said.

He said it was "possible" De Guzman would be used as a state witness after the rest of the hit squad that killed Tabara and Kintanar were captured and charged in court.

"That depends but, yes, that's possible... If his help would be favorable to us, why would we not use him?" Kison said.

The military said De Guzman, 38, who used the alias Rafael Cruz, was acting secretary of the CPP regional party committee in Central Luzon as well as secretary of the Bulacan party committee.

He was arrested at his house in Norzagaray, Bulacan, by a joint military and police team on May 11. He was presented to the media on May 22.

But the CPP has disowned De Guzman.

"As far as we know, he is neither the CPP secretary in Bulacan nor is he a member of any NPA unit. We do not have a clue as to the identity of this man," said party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal in a statement.

He said CPP officials in Central Luzon told him yesterday that all party and NPA officials and members in the region were accounted for.

De Guzman's background, meanwhile, remained sketchy. He is being held by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Tabara and Kintanar, former top leaders of the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, entered into a peace deal with the government in 1992. They were gunned down in 2004 and 2003, respectively.

The CPP-NPA took responsibility for their deaths, saying they were meted out "revolutionary punishment."

The Isafp said De Guzman was the triggerman in the Tabara killing and a "backup" gunman in Kintanar's assassination.

But De Guzman was not among those earlier identified by the Philippine National Police as suspects in Kintanar's murder.

The PNP Intelligence Group then headed by Chief Supt. Robert Delfin had identified the suspects as Leo Velasco, Philip Limjoco and Bartolome Melchor.

A Philip Limjoco, 52, a martial law political prisoner, was reported missing on May 8. He was last seen by his son in Dau, Pampanga.

It was not known if he was the same Limjoco who was tagged by the PNP as a suspect.

A Philip Limjoco was also among the 51 persons, including former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and the Bayan Muna party-list representatives, recently charged with rebellion in connection with the attempted coup last Feb. 24.

Kison said De Guzman did not mention Velasco, Limjoco or Melchor as his accomplices.

"Those names have not come up in the investigation. He has not mentioned them so far," he said. *With Delfin T. Mallari Jr., S. Luzon Bureau*

# Drug arrest of ex-officers alarms PAF

**By Nikko Dizon**

THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE (PAF) ADMITted yesterday that the recent arrest of two of its retired commissioned officers for alleged drug use was "quite alarming."

But PAF spokesperson Major Augusto dela Peña said the military service implemented stringent measures to ensure that its pilots and enlisted personnel were drug-free.

"*Medyo alarming kung tutuusin* (It's a bit alarming) but we have measures to weed out [those taking drugs]—no pun intended," Dela Peña told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Retired Lt. Col. Alex Hernandez and retired Major Josefino Gabor, both 45, were among the eight men that agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) caught allegedly sniffing shabu in a Parañaque City home last week.

Two other suspects were policemen. One was Gabor's brother, Chief Inspector Robert Gabor, 48, assigned at the Philippine National Police Holding Center in Camp Crame.

# Australia donates forensic equipment

AUSTRALIA WILL give the Philippines some P200 million worth of high-tech forensic equipment to boost its ability to investigate terror attacks, a police general said yesterday.

Ernesto Belen, head of the Philippine National Police's crime laboratory, said five machines used for chemical analysis of explosives were expected to arrive in Manila by August as part of a $10-million counterterrorism assistance package from Australia.

Australia has allocated nearly $130 million in regional counterterrorism assistance. *Reuters*

# Palace unfazed by new impeach move

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID IT was not at all concerned about the plan of the minority in the House of Representatives to file a second impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo since they were divided on the issue.

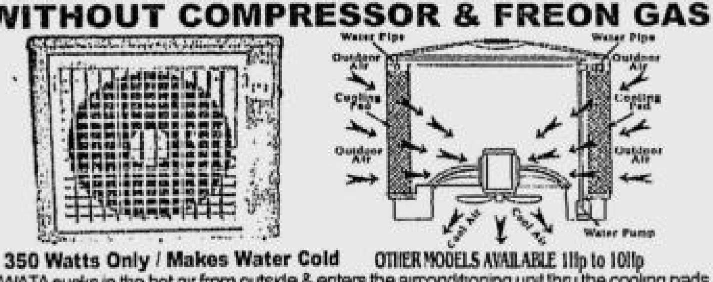
Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said "quite a number" of opposition members of the House were "hesitant" to sign the complaint.

"The first impeachment bid was shot down before it got to first base and it is understandable that the opposition will not have the will and determination to pursue a second round," said Bunye in a briefing.

The opposition mounted a spirited campaign to impeach the President last year following the public's outcry over the "Hello Garci" scandal which strongly suggested the President had cheated in the 2006 elections.

The opposition needed to get 79 of the 236 members to sign the impeachment complaint to send it to the Senate for trial but it could only muster 52 signatures.

"Impeachment is a lost cause not only because it lacks popular support; it has no legal leg to stand on. It has lost its relevance in the face of increasing political and economic stability," Bunye said. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*



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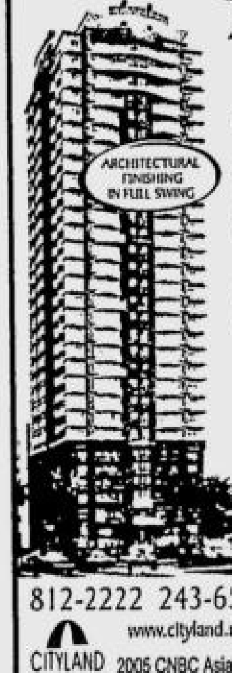

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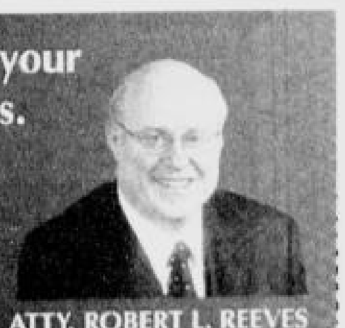

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# BIR exceeds excise tax target in 1st 4 months

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REvenue generated a total of P18.52 billion in excise tax collections from January to April this year, exceeding its target of P17.05 billion for the four-month period.

For the month of April, the BIR said it also surpassed its excise target collection of P4.024 million by eight percent or P316,000 contrary to a newspaper report that there was a shortfall.

Collection from alcohol and tobacco products amounted to P3.31 billion or an excess of P198 million over its P3.11 billion goal.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag denied that the bureau's monthly take from excise sources went down despite higher tax rates on sin products.

The excise tax is imposed on goods manufactured in or imported into the country for domestic sale or consumption. It is required to be paid by a manufacturer/producer before removal of domestic products from the place of production.

The BIR chief came under fire following the dismal performance of the revenue agency in April.

Top officials of the House Committee on Ways and Means will meet today with their Senate counterparts to discuss possible refinements in the BIR operations and collection target.

The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP) will convene to review BIR's performance, and to tackle such issues as the agency's failure to achieve its collection target thus far.

But Rep. Jesli Lapus, Ways and Means Committee Chair and Vice Chair Rep. Exequiel Javier expressed support for Buñag amid criticism over the BIR's failure to achieve its collection target for the first four months of the year.

Both congressmen were confident that the BIR under Buñag's leadership would be able to overhaul its collection deficit and achieve its total collection target of P546.9 billion for the year.

They said the BIR needed all the public's support considering the whopping 23.42 percent increase in its collection target over last year, even as they tasked the agency to jump-start its campaign against tax evasion and plug other revenues leakages, pursuant to the directive of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lapus noted that the BIR's total collections as of April of P206.3 billion were still P33.1 billion or 19.1 percent more than last year.

Revenues collected in April, the month for personal income tax filing, reached P71.4 billion, or 13 percent higher than the same period last year.

But the Department of Finance noted that the BIR incurred a P7.2 billion shortfall in April based on its target of P78.6 billion.

The BIR blamed the April shortfall on the increase in the use of withholding tax credits to offset tax payments, higher utilization of tax credit certificates, lower corporate income tax payments since many firms remitted the bulk of their payments in the first three quarters of 2005, and increase in the use of minimum corporate income tax payments for loss years to avoid their expiration.

"The one-month collection shortfall in April could be explained, since collection target refinements are in order due to higher non-cash revenues which are nonetheless still revenues," said Lapus.

However, Lapus, remained confident the BIR would still achieve its second quarter collection target of P189.8 billion.

Javier also expressed confidence that Buñag could achieve BIR's ambitious collection targets for the year.

BUÑAG

# IBM offers jobs to all iACADEMY graduates

**IBM forecasted a bright future for all iACADEMY graduates as the company offered job opportunities for all of them during the school's 1st commencement exercises last May 13, 2006 held at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium at the RCBC Plaza in Makati City.**

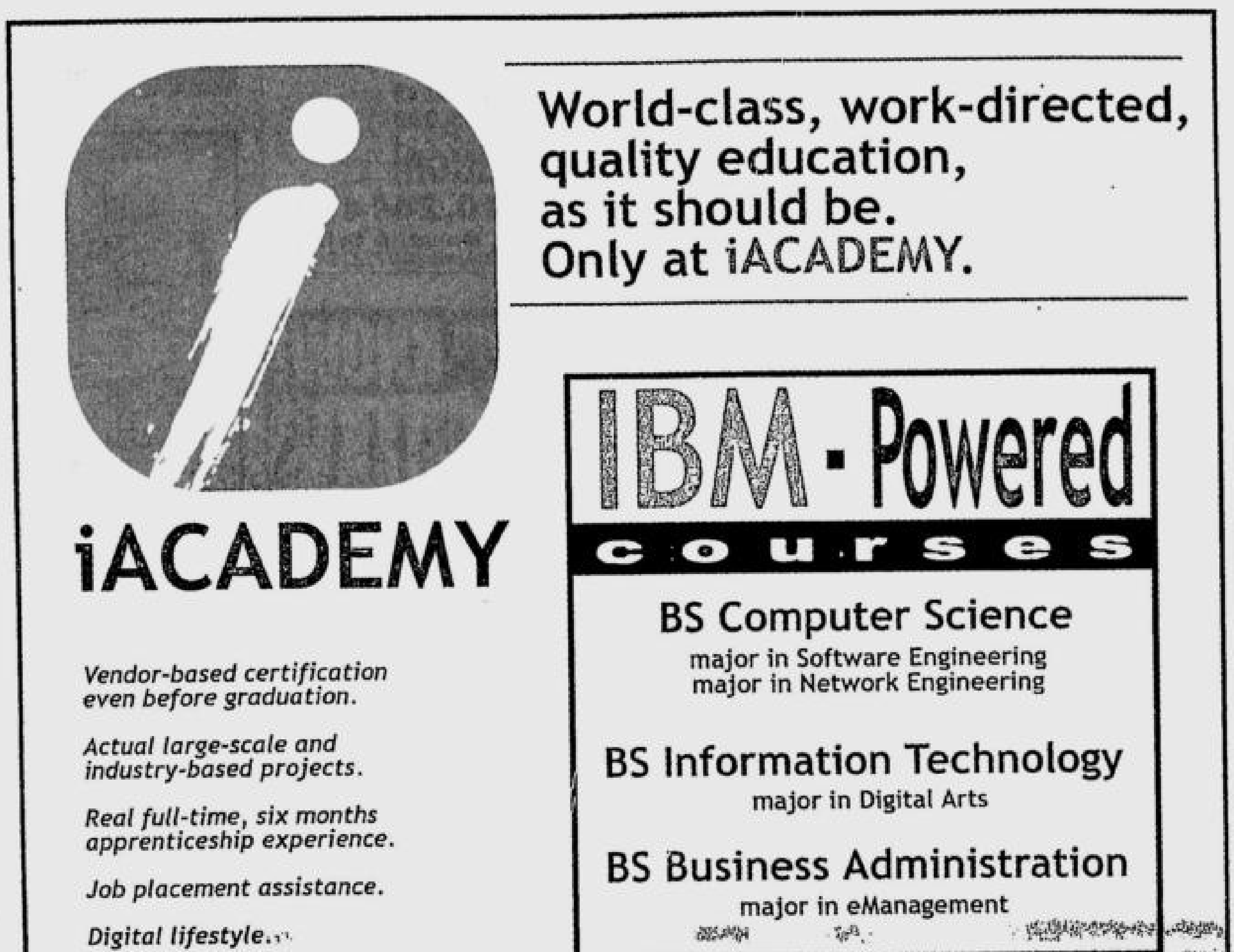
**The good news was delivered by no less than IBM Philippines' President and General Manager, Mr. Joaquin E. Quintos IV who graced the event as the Guest of Honor and Commencement Exercises Speaker.**

Quintos' speech focused on innovation in the area related to both individual and enterprise dynamics. He stated that businesses nowadays depend on contributions of individuals. More and more companies are searching for individuals who are equipped with the "right skills" required by the industry to empower their enterprise.

These ideas of innovation and honing individuals with the appropriate skills are the same forces that motivated the partnership between iACADEMY and IBM.

"We at IBM are very honored to be partners with iACADEMY, as we strive to deliver high quality IBM-powered education to the general public. We are pleased the partnership between iACADEMY and IBM has now produced its initial results and we look forward to a long and stronger partnership moving forward," Quintos stated.

Furthermore, Quintos commended, "This IBM-powered iACADEMY program hits the 'sweet spot' of the industry requirement."



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Aside from the fact that iACADEMY students get actual & large-scale projects and full-time six to seven months internship with world-class companies such as Smart Communications Inc., and Nestlé Philippines, Incorporated to name a few, with IBM-powered courses offered by iACADEMY, all students get certified by IBM even before they graduate, thus, giving Quintos the confidence to recommend the iACADEMY graduates to apply at IBM.

The students, parents, guests, and the iACADEMY staff present during the commencement exercises loudly applauded as Quintos offered job openings at IBM to all iACADEMY graduates as a boost to those who would like to build a strong career in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Parents could not help but beam with pride and satisfaction for seeing their sons and daughters graduate from a school offering a work-directed program.

As for Mr. Mitch Andaya, the Dean and COO of iACADEMY, his passionate speech did not only inspire the new graduates but also welled up emotions as he reminisced bits of the four years he shared with the first batch of iACADEMY students.

Hon. Teodoro Locsin, Jr. and Mr. Tomas Lopez, members of iACADEMY Board of Governors who were present, as well as Mr. Monico Jacob, the President and CEO of iACADEMY, were also grateful for the trust that the parents and students gave iACADEMY for the past years.

Stormy weather loomed overhead as they left the Carlos P. Romulo auditorium. Nevertheless, the exhilarated and inspired graduates seemed undaunted especially because great opportunities await them, not to mention career options in IBM, for a start.

***

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# Coalition formed to fight foreign drug companies

By Christian V. Esguerra

FED UP WITH THE HIGH COST OF MEDICINE in the country, reportedly the second most expensive in Asia after Japan, several groups of consumers, health workers and clergymen have formed a coalition with the Department of Health to help break the multinational companies' stranglehold on the local pharmaceutical industry.

Officials of the coalition, called Ayos na Gamot sa Abot-Kayang Presyo (Agap), said breaking such dominance, particularly through legislation, would help lower the local cost of medicine.

The coalition binds the Free Trade Alliance (FTA), Third World Network, Citizens Alliance for Consumer Power, Association of Barangay Health Workers-NCR, and the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment.

It's the broadest effort so far to combat the scourge of high-priced medicines in the country, former senator and FTA convenor Wigberto Tañada told reporters after the coalition's launching at the Philippine General Hospital yesterday.

"The battle is quite difficult because the enemies are very powerful," he said, referring to multinational drug companies which purportedly control 70 percent of the local pharmaceutical industry. "They have great influence in and out of the government."

## Optimistic

But Agap members were optimistic, especially after getting the support of Sen. Mar Roxas, who authored a bill seeking amendments to the Intellectual Property Code, Health Undersecretary Alex Padilla, the Bureau of Food and Drugs, and the Philippine International Trading Corp.

"This alliance is an important first step in achieving our dream of low-priced medicines in the country," Roxas said.

The coalition hopes that the Roxas bill would become a law since it takes into account "flexibilities" in the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement.

At present, the country is saddled by restrictions against the importation of medicines which Agap hopes would provide healthy competition to multinational companies.

Roxas said the idea was to ensure that local prices were reasonable, meaning at par with the rates in other countries.

In its declaration, Agap said it wants full implementation of the Generics Act of 1998 whose main objective was to provide the public with cheaper alternatives without sacrificing quality associated with branded medicines.

A table provided by the Citizens Alliance for Consumer Power showed noticeable discrepancies in the prices of branded and generic medicines.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 24, 2006
6th Week of Easter

**1st Reading:** Acts 17:15, 22-18:1
**Gospel:** John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. When he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into the whole truth.

"He has nothing to say of himself but he will speak of what he hears, and he will tell you of the things to come. He will take what is mine and make it known to you; in doing this, he will glorify me. All that the Father has is mine; because of this I have just told you, that the Spirit will take what is mine and make it known to you."

**Commentary**

*We get to meet those who picked up the legacy and faith of the disciples. Paul preaches about the unknown god—a statue that stands in Athens—speaks of Jesus now known in word, deed and flesh. This is Jesus who will judge the world with justice; Jesus who has been raised from the dead. Only a few believe. The Word of God is fathomless. The depth is endless and there is always so much more to say. But the gift of the Spirit is given to guide us ever deeper into the truth of the scriptures. All that the Father has given to Jesus, he now seeks to share with us. We are babes in knowing God.*

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LIFESTYLE CHECK FLUNKERS

# BIR couple charged with graft

**By Nelson F. Flores**

A HUSBAND AND WIFE WORKING AS REVenue officers for the Bureau of Internal Revenue have been charged with graft after they failed a lifestyle check.

Marlon Pascual and his wife Emma de Lara Pascual, who were both employed at the San Pablo City revenue district, were charged with violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act after an investigation conducted by the Department of Finance-Revenue Integrity Protection Service turned up evidence that the couple was living beyond their means.

"Despite a combined salary of approximately P24,065 only and even less during their earlier years in government service, the spouses Pascuals were able to accumulate wealth or substantial properties grossly disproportionate to. their government income," read the complaint filed with the Office of Ombudsman yesterday.

According to the DOF-RIPS, the Pascuals were able to acquire three prime properties in San Pablo City, and a house and lot in Baguio City, which they allegedly tried to conceal; and vehicles consisting of a Mitsubishi L-300 and Hyundai Starex vans, a 2003 model Mitsubishi car, a Honda CRV Sports Utility Vehicle, and a Ford Explorer van worth P2 million.

Investigators noted that the Mitsubishi car was registered in the name of Denise Anne Pascual, the couple's daughter who they said had no known gainful employment or business enterprise to justify her acquisition of the vehicle.

The Starex van, bought in 2000, was registered to another daughter, Blessilda, who at the time of the purchase was financially dependent on her parents, the DOF-RIPS documents further showed.

The Honda CRV and Ford Expedition van were acquired in 2001 and 2002. Both vehicles were not declared in the couple's statement of assets, liabilities and net worth.

DOF-RIP agents said foreign travel was a regular feature of the Pascual lifestyle.

Bureau of Immigration records submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman showed that from 2001 to 2004, Emma Pascual went to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Thailand. In 2001, 2003 and 2006, the wife went to Shanghai and the husband to Hong Kong.

The three Pascual children also traveled abroad in 2002, 2003 and 2005, mostly to Singapore.

"These accumulations and manifestations of wealth do not even include family expenditures and tuition fees of respondent daughters which, judging by respondents' standard of living, could not be less than substantial," the complaint stated.

# Families of missing Erap backers seek help of Senate

**By Juliet Labog-Javellana**

THE FAMILIES OF five missing leaders of a militant organization identified with detained President Joseph Estrada yesterday sought the help of senators in finding their loved ones and obtaining justice for them.

Estrada's son, Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, delivered a privilege speech condemning the Arroyo administration and the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) for the abduction of Virgilio Eustaquio, Jim Cabauatan, Ruben Dionisio, Jose Curameng and Dennis Ebona.

They were officials of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice who were abducted by heavily armed men while having a meeting in Eustaquio's house in Kamuning, Quezon City last Monday.

The Senate committee on human rights was asked to conduct an investigation.

Miriam Eustaquio, Gloria Curameng and Brenda Ebona went to the Senate yesterday and asked the help of Jinggoy, his mother Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Jinggoy said there is no information yet as to the whereabouts of abducted UMDJ leaders. He said he has received unconfirmed reports that the Isafp was behind the abduction in broad daylight.

Jinggoy said the UMDJ is a legitimate organization though it is "openly critical" of the Arroyo administration.

"It is an organization that was established to uncover the truth behind the lies of the Arroyo government," he said.

Jinggoy denounced the "brutal and gangster-like" abduction of the pro-Estrada leaders. He said the situation has gone from bad to worse under Ms Arroyo.

"I reiterate this warning because I am certain that the next target will be members of the legitimate opposition. And when that happens, there will be no one else anymore to protest," Jinggoy said.

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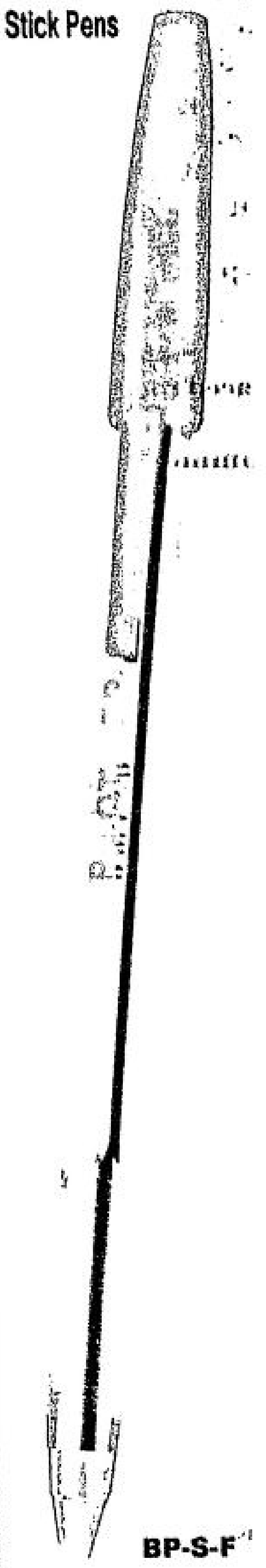

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PILOT CORPORATION
Tokyo Japan

ISSN
0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 21 No. 165
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

# OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000
•100% soy ink•

## Pattern of impunity

**EDITORIAL**

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS weighed in on the killings of activists and members of the media. CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing told the INQUIRER: "We strongly condemn the spate of killings that have yet to be resolved and we have noted that there is a perceived pattern of the violation of the human right to life... If several deaths happened in just a week, these constitute a pattern of impunity." She added: "The pattern of complaints that come to us shows members of the Armed Forces and the PNP (Philippine National Police) as suspects. That has to be addressed and we call on the military to do something about it." And then she bluntly set aside the Arroyo administration's pet rationalizations: "We couldn't care less what colors the killers are. Is the government so helpless?"

Quisumbing then went on to explain, "In human rights terms, the government is still responsible even if persons in authority are not those behind the killings. The government is still responsible in protecting the right to life and the security of homes and public order and property."

That is precisely the point, and one that we have raised repeatedly: the burden of proof rests firmly on the agents of the state, and the circumstantial evidence is strong enough to warrant scrutinizing law enforcement officials.

Strong as Quisumbing's words are, her real objective is to spur the military to action. She said it should take the lead in looking into a situation that is both scandalous and alarming.

In a sense, what is happening is just the latest manifestation of a problem that has existed since the twilight of the Marcos dictatorship. Civilians, concerned about military abuses, appeal to the officer corps to take a hand in fighting those abuses. The AFP, faced with such questions, instinctively passes on the blame to its enemies and resents calls for investigation. Even when the CHR was a presidential committee, prior to the ratification of the present Constitution, this problem was already evident. And it hasn't gone away.

The administration has claimed that the Communist Party of the Philippines is engaged in yet another of those party purges and that the killings—whether of 143 militants from 2006 to March of this year, as the CHR has taken notice of, or 566 or even 601 (depending on who's asked) since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office—are liquidations being undertaken for the CPP's own purposes. Such a claim is, of course, historically plausible, as books ranging from Gregg Jones' to William Chapman's to Joel Rocamora's studies of the communist rebellion suggest. What seems less plausible, though, is that such a purge would take place in such a spectacularly public manner. The past party purge undertaken after Edsa I, after all, remains shrouded in mystery and controversy.

On the other hand, equally—and actually, more—plausible is the connection that has been made between the areas of assignment of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and an increase in extrajudicial killings and assassinations in those places. Combine these with Palparan's penchant for bloodthirsty rhetoric, and the military brass' decision—fully endorsed by the President—to sweep aside all calls for investigations, preferring, instead, promotions and decorations for Palparan, it isn't difficult to think that the administration fully approves of what he says—and does.

In the end, though, whether the military is doing the liquidating, or the CPP, or both, as Quisumbing says, is not the point. The obligation of the government is not only to put a stop to such killings but to bring the killers to justice. Violence is being done not only to a political minority, it is being inflicted on the majority. The signal being sent to a society that already views life as cheap is that lives dedicated to particular political goals, if such goals don't match official priorities, are cheaper still.

The Philippine military, like any other military anywhere in the world, prefers its own code and system of justice to that of civilians. But it cannot demand its own justice for the purpose of simply protecting its turf or, worse, so that it can ignore troublesome allegations. The AFP likes to say it is a partner for progress. All it has proven up to now is that it may be a party to a bloody conspiracy.

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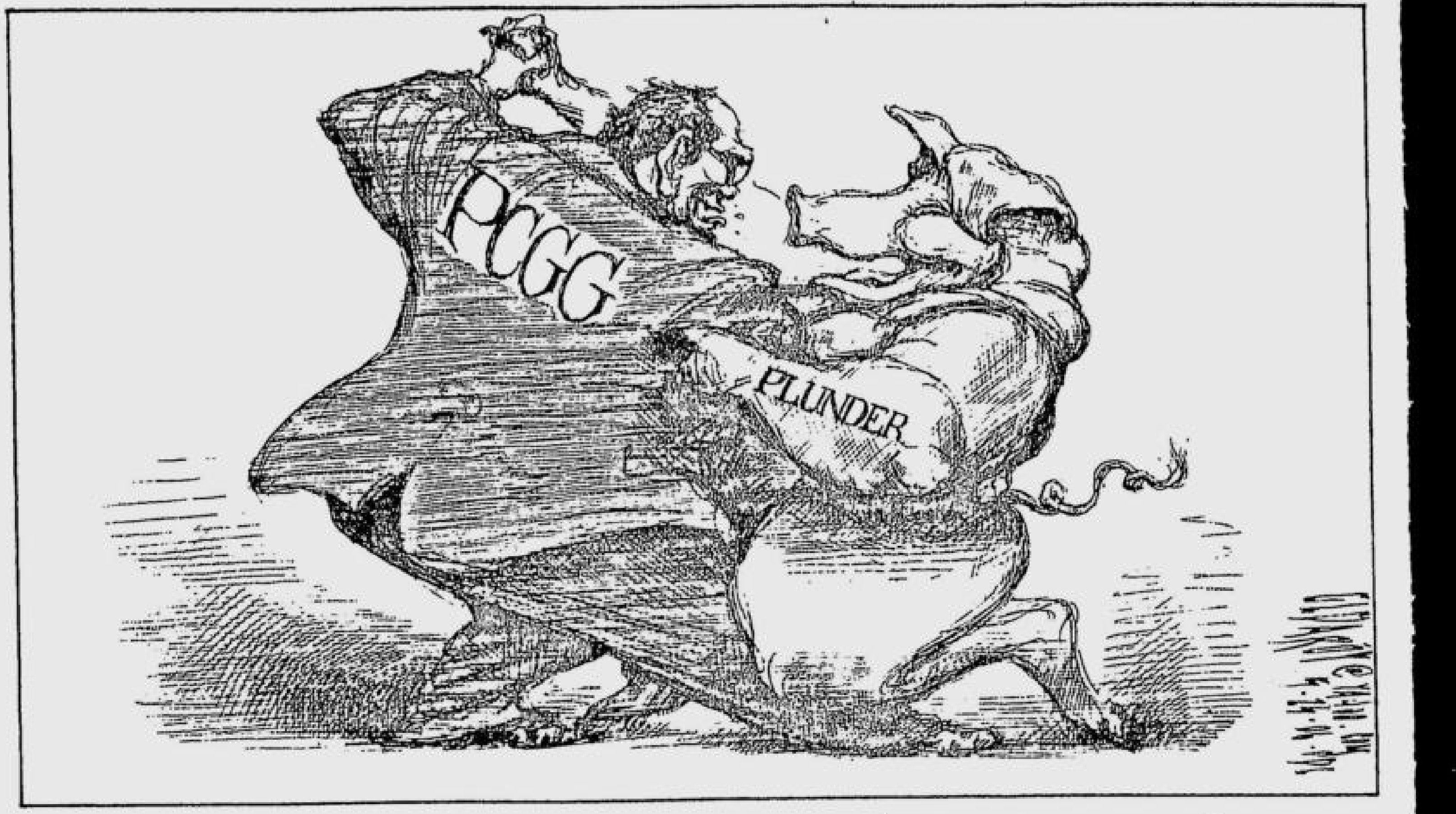

## Mysteries around the MWSS housing project

### As I See It

*Neal H. Cruz*

IF YOU BOUGHT A PIECE OF LAND AND somebody offers to swap it with a property that is twice as big, won't you grab it? You would jump at it, unless there is a very good reason for you not to, such as millions of pesos. This is the mystery behind the insistence of a group of members of two labor unions of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), through self-proclaimed surrogates, on putting their housing project on 58 hectares of land inside the La Mesa Dam watershed where it would pollute the water in the reservoir that is the source of the drinking water of 12 million residents of Metro Manila.

There are other mysteries. Like, why would somebody shell out more than P3 million of his own money to pay for the land, even mortgaging his own property to produce the amount? Why would a congressman from Bicol expend his time and effort to represent (pro bono, he claims) people who are not his constituents but who are from Quezon City, thousands of kilometers away from his district? And why would this same congressman act as a messenger for the financier, hand-carrying the P3 million check to the MWSS to hasten the deal? Why is he so unduly interested in consummating the deal?

Why are so many public relations practitioners working for the housing project even if their own water supply would be put in jeopardy by the project?

Who is going to fund the development? The so-called "mitigating measures" alone, bandied by the congressman to prevent the pollution of the reservoir, would cost at least P100 million. The cost of land development and the houses would multiply that amount many times more. Why incur P100 million more, which would have to be charged to the beneficiaries, when you can save that much just by moving to another location?

I did some quick arithmetic and came up with another mystery. Fifty-eight hectares of the watershed has been allotted for the housing project for only 1,411 beneficiaries. At the announced 300 sq m per beneficiary, only 423,000 sq m, or 42.3 hectares are needed, plus one hectare for the road network. What will happen to the remaining 15 hectares?

I posed this question to the people representing those pushing the housing project (Rep. Edcel Lagman, counsel of the beneficiaries; Ishko Katibayan, representing the labor unions; and Assistant MWSS Administrator Macra Cruz) at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday, but they didn't answer the question. (The other panelists were Toto Balayon, operations manager of Bantay Kalikasan which is opposing the housing project, and Val Mendoza, also of Bantay Kalikasan.)

So, I ask the question again: What will happen to the remaining 15 hectares? Is it true that this will be used for a commercial complex, a mall and high-rise condominiums? Is it true that this will take up the entire portion along Quirino Avenue? The answers to these questions might explain why so many characters are unduly pushing the project.

When a lawyer claims he is handling a case pro bono, as Lagman claims in this case, it means he is not accepting any money. But a lawyer can be paid some other way, such as with a piece of land, like so many lawyers who handled land cases. (By the way, congressmen are prohibited by law from acting as lawyers for clients while they are members of the House.) Fifteen hectares along a main street like Quirino Avenue in Novaliches can cost several hundred million pesos. A 15-hectare mall would make Megamall look like a midget.

I am not suggesting anything, but does that look like a likely explanation for the undue interest of some characters in the housing project? Does it look like the MWSS workers are being used to push the agenda of these characters? All the workers want is their own homes, and these are being offered to them in another site that is safe and that poses no risk to the health and lives of 12 million fellow Filipinos. So why is it being made to appear that they are insisting on having their housing project inside the La Mesa watershed?

Lagman delivered a privilege speech in the House of Representatives last May 15 attacking the INQUIRER for its editorial opposing the housing project in the La Mesa watershed. He also devoted a big part of the speech defending the project. Among other things, he said that giant commercial centers like SM and Robinson's and about 20 subdivisions are in the vicinity of the watershed, some of which are "closer to the reservoir" than the MWSS housing project.

He conveniently forgot to mention, however, that all of them are not only outside the watershed (the watershed is fenced) but also on the opposite slope of the ridge surrounding La Mesa. The land here slopes away from the reservoir, unlike the site of the MWSS housing project which is inside the watershed and slopes down toward the reservoir. Water from the commercial centers and the subdivisions flow away from the reservoir while waste from the MWSS housing project would flow toward it. Also, the subdivisions that are nearer to the reservoir are in sites lower than the reservoir so there is no danger of their effluents flowing into it. The MWSS housing project, on the other hand, is much higher than the reservoir, and there is no place for the rainwater to flow but down into the reservoir.

Lagman also said that "mitigating measures" costing at least P100 million would be applied to prevent pollution of the reservoir, and that the La Mesa watershed "has not yet been declared a protected area." These will be discussed in the next column.

## Paradoxes

### There's the Rub

*Conrado de Quiros*

I GOT AN INTERESTING TEXT LAST WEEKend that said: "We Filipinos have managed to reach the top of Mt. Everest. When will we manage to reach the foot of Mendiola Bridge?"

Good question, and one that reminded me of the insight about humankind as a whole conquering outer space but not inner space. I first caught a glimpse of this idea from a song by Cat Stevens in the early 1970s. The song was "Where Do the Children Play" and it began: "Well I think it's fine, building jumbo planes/ Or taking a ride on a cosmic train./ Switch on summer from a slot machine./ Get what you want to if you want, 'cause you can get anything. (Refrain) I know we've come a long way,/ We're changing day to day,/ But tell me, where do the children play?"

The second and third stanzas are more of the same, about it being fine building roads that go on and on and skyscrapers that rise up and up, followed by the question: But tell me, where do the children play?

(I must confess that for a while I stopped listening to Cat Stevens after reading of his apparent endorsement of Iran's fatwa, or death sentence, on Salman Rushdie, but that turns out to be false. Stevens himself, or Yusuf Islam, as he now calls himself, adopting that name after he converted to Islam in 1979, explained later that what happened was that while delivering a lecture in a college in London in 1989, he was asked by a reporter what his thoughts were on apostates and blasphemers. He quoted Islamic texts in reply and was horrified next day to find the fellow's newspaper screaming "Cat Says Kill Rushdie."

(The canard has since been laid to rest, Yusuf Islam not just being accepted back by his peers but being embraced for exemplary work. In 2004, a committee of Nobel laureates gave him the Man of Peace prize. The following year, the University of Gloucestershire also gave him an honorary doctorate for contributions to education and humanitarian relief.

(Kind of helps to restore your faith in humanity. I myself couldn't reconcile the gentle soul who sang "Morning Has Broken" with the religious fanatic who wanted a writer murdered for his beliefs.)

Much later, George Carlin would amplify on the point. He wrote: "The paradox of our time is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine but less wellness....

"We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We've conquered outer space but not inner space.

"We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less."

There's more, but you get the drift. It does raise a lot of questions about the things that really matter in life, or the difference between gold and glitter. This country has its own unique paradoxes, and the text message I got about us managing to reach the top of the world but not the bottom of a bridge by the Pasig has inspired me to make my own list of them:

We object violently to the apparent falsehoods of a work of fiction, but we accept abjectly the patent lies of a real piece of work currently residing in Malacañang. We find that "The Da Vinc Code" is full of s—t, but we find that the D Venecia Code is full of grit. (I got both from tex messages as well.)

We have more bishops to help us discern truth from lie, but we have fewer bishops who can te truth from lie. We have more religious leaders t lead the flock to the straight and narrow, but w have more (un)faithful straying into the wid and crooked. We have more religious cults t help sinners find the light of God, but we hav more pious men being blinded by the glitter o gold. We have more TV stations preaching th word of God, but we have fewer people listenin to the word of God.

We are the most religious country in Asia, bu we are the most immoral country in Asia. We ar one of the most gifted people in the world, bu we are one of the most backward people in th world. We have more lawyers, but we have le law. We have more courts, but we have less ju tice. We have more legislators, but we have le legislation. We have more cops, but we have le peace and order. We have more anti-corrupti bodies, but we have more corruption. We ha more people partaking of riches abroad, but w have more people starving at home. We ha more people taking care of the sick and elde abroad, but we have fewer people taking care the sick and elderly at home. We've beco "globalized," but we remain parochial. We spe English more than other Asians, but we comm nicate less than other Asians. We have more e cation, but we have less learning. We have m Ph.D.s, but we have less IQ.

We want to Cha-cha, but we are paralyz We plan more, but we achieve less. We tra more, but we reach less. We are the long democracy in Asia, but we are the longest aut racy in Asia. We extol the virtues of hum rights, but we kill journalists and leftists. W pride ourselves on being free, but we refuse believe that the truth shall make us free.

We have managed to reach the top of M Everest. When will we reach the foot of Mend la Bridge?

# 'The world is flat'

**COMMENTARY**

*Nono Alfonso, S.J.*
*Institute on Church and Social Issues*

IN HIS BOOK, "THE WORLD IS FLAT: A BRIEF History of the Twenty-first Century," Thomas Friedman dwells on the changes that are fast shaping the global economy and international politics. These, he says, are hinged on "three convergences": the invention of new technology, which in turn has created a new playing field among countries, companies and individuals, including such new players as India and China. All these have conspired, he says, to create a "flat" world, that is, a more horizontal world.

In contrast with the old economic order which was marked by the domination of the so-called North countries such as the United States and Europe, in this horizontal world, even developing countries have become economic stakeholders. He cites the case of Bangalore in India which has been very successful in the IT industry. Indeed in this flat world, India and China have become emerging economic superpowers. Moreover, individuals with know-how are empowered and get to compete with the rest of the world. Now more than ever, he writes, Indian and Chinese nationals no longer need to leave their countries, but can create their niches right at home.

This new world order, Friedman says, does not only bring economic benefits but also political advantages, in particular, international peace and order. It will be recalled that in his book, "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," he proposed—albeit with tongue in cheek—that those countries with the McDonald's franchise do not easily go to war. With their rising economic status as marked by the McDonald's restaurant, the middle class would be reluctant to get into war with any country.

In "The World is Flat," Friedman offers a new theory: what he calls the "Dell theory of conflict prevention." Dell, of course, is the successful US computer company which outsources to other countries many of its operations. According to this theory, countries which are part of what he terms the "global supply chain," would naturally avoid war lest they lose their economic position in that supply chain. He cites the example of India which nearly went to war with Pakistan in 2004. A strong lobby from the booming IT sector in India put pressure on the war-mongering politicians of the Indian parliament, which might have been the single factor that prevented the war.

A second case is that of Taiwan. In 2004, the government went into the elections with a political platform declaring independence from China. It lost in the elections, the populace not wanting to agitate China and unnecessarily compromise its business relations with China.

Finally, on the issue of terrorism, he cites the case of Indian Muslims. For him, it is not surprising that no Indian Muslims have been found to be involved in the al-Qaida terrorist network in general, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in particular. The reason for this, Friedman opines, is simply that Indian Muslims are empowered economically and see their stake in the globalizing world—something that we must seriously consider in the ongoing conflict in Mindanao.

But what has all this got to do with countries like our own? Friedman, in a section on the unflat world, prescribes the usual need for fundamental economics, good government, education and infrastructure. However, more interesting is his insistence that what can spell the difference for fledgling economies is culture.

Firstly, Friedman says, the culture should be one that is "outward," that is, open to engaging the global community. According to him, what accounted for the success of China and India was their opening up to the world.

Secondly, in a paradoxical way, this culture must remain "inward." He writes, "By that I mean, to what degree is there a sense of national solidarity and a focus on development ... and to what degree are the elites in the country concerned with the masses and ready to invest at home, or are they indifferent to their own poor and more interested in investing abroad."

For the Philippines, there is the rub. Although we have proven ourselves to be outward-looking with the "hospitality" in which we take pride, how inward-looking we are in terms of nationalism or patriotism does not come across clearly. In the ongoing political controversy, for instance, in particular, the question of Charter change, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, for one, clearly doubts whether the purpose is really the good of the country. Or, whether in fact such a costly political exercise would only benefit the deeply entrenched interests of the political and economic elite.

In the end, for Friedman, the challenge for developing countries in a flatter world is how to empower them, how to make them stakeholders of their future and that of the world. Empowered, they are able to dream and imagine. And for Friedman, that is what the flat world is all about.

Ushered in by the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989 (11/9), the flat world was born on that eventful day when we were able to imagine a world beyond the Cold War, a world that can be united and in peace. The future of the world will also depend on this capacity to dream and imagine. Friedman writes: "People who are connected to the world and exposed to different cultures and perspectives are far more likely to develop the imagination of 11/9. People who are feeling disconnected, for whom personal freedom and fulfillment are a utopian fantasy, are more likely to develop the imagination of 9/11."

# Art for peace and development

**AT LARGE**

*Rina Jimenez-David*

BIGWIGS IN GOVERNMENT, CULTURE MINISters, artists and students crowded Maharlika Hall in Malacañang during the reception for the delegates to the Unesco-International Theatre Institute Congress and the Theatre Olympics of the Nations.

With guests requested to come in "national dress," the venue turned into a dizzying, colorful tapestry of costumes, especially our countryfolk representing various indigenous communities, who came in colorful tribal weaves festooned with beads, feathers and embroidery.

But outshining even the finery were the young performers chosen to provide the night's entertainment. The Loboc Children's Choir from Bohol performed a number together with the Chimali Children's Choir from Tumauilipas, Mexico, a song sung in three languages (Filipino, Spanish and English) and written as a collaboration between Mexican and Filipino artists (music was by Lutgardo Labad) to promote the Millennium Development Goals. Performers with the Earthsavers Dreams Ensemble, composed of promising poor performers, some of them people with disabilities, also interpreted the song in dance.

After this thrilling number, the Loboc Children's Choir performed a spirited interpretation of "Sitsiritsit," a familiar children's folk ditty. The Chimali Choir, including a string ensemble, then performed another song.

The evening's entertainment was capped by a performance from Mindanao, a dancer accompanied on the gamelan by a blind musician who has been honored as a living national treasure.

* * *

**THOUGH the event centers around drama and provides artists and young people from around the world a venue to discuss the contributions of theater to uplifting the human condition, the ongoing congress and festival underscore, I think, the power of art to move people and initiate change.**

**It's too bad that the venues for the performances and workshops are scattered all over the metropolis, making tracking them a difficult task, indeed. But the dedicated student of theater and the arts will be rewarded richly.**

**As National Commission for Culture and the Arts executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez said: "This will be a defining moment not only for the Philippines but also for the global community of artists and cultural workers. We shall witness in the next few days the commitment of the world's 'theater powers' to use their arsenal of creativity for the cause of fighting global illiteracy and malnutrition, poverty and injustice."**

* * *

THERE'S a news report that the Baguio City government is suing a drug trading firm for P3 million in damages for running a print ad that "implied a link" between the city and meningococcemia, an infectious and fatal strain of meningitis.

If you will recall, Baguio made it to the headlines last year after a number of "meningo" cases were reported. The supposed "outbreak" cost Baguio businesses millions of pesos in actual damages and lost potential income after tourist arrivals abruptly stopped and major conventions were canceled.

Perhaps the city government is justified in its action, since it wants the "meningo" link sooner forgotten, and anything that serves to remind the public about the disease must be smacked down as soon as possible. There's more than a smidgen of malice, too, in the use of pictures of Kennon Road and of rice terraces to sell an anti-meningococcemia vaccine.

But city officials cannot wash their hands completely clean of blame. It was the Baguio mayor, after all, who drew national attention to the "meningo" scare when he declared a state of emergency in Baguio after the first few cases were reported. Baguio residents, who had tourism-related businesses in the city I talked with were furious about this development and even swore they would support any recall procedure lodged against their mayor. I don't know how such an initiative fared, but the "meningo" scare in Baguio still stands as a classic example of how to turn a limited, though worrying, number of cases into a full-blown public health crisis.

* * *

NOTES: My friend Mila Alora texted to tell me that the title of the song composed by Paul Anka for Sammy Davis Jr., which was featured in Anka's recent concert at the Araneta Coliseum, is "I'm Not Every Other Man." Anka said he wrote the song as the finale of a TV special of Davis, which turned out to be a farewell anthem of sorts for the African-American entertainer who died shortly after.

Friends warn me that they were decidedly "underwhelmed" by "The Da Vinci Code," perhaps one of the most-awaited movies of the year, what with the huge controversy it stirred in these parts. I haven't seen the film yet, but I can well understand how a movie, no matter how well-made, cannot but disappoint, since it could not possibly live up to all the hype.

I wanted to share my views on the movie with readers as soon as I could, but when we went to Eastwood cinemas Sunday evening in hopes of catching a screening, we were told that all screenings had been sold out. When we asked what screening (in two theaters) we could buy advance tickets for, we were told that it was for the midnight showing!

A friend from Columbia Pictures explained that the decision of the SM Group, which accounts for about 40 percent of theaters in the country, not to show "Da Vinci" severely limited the number of theaters carrying the movie, leading to the outsize demand for tickets.

# An intriguing love poem for Rizal

**LOOKING BACK**

*Ambeth R. Ocampo*

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT TEACHING WILL not make anyone rich, but it has enough psychic rewards to make the financial sacrifice worth it. Teaching keeps my feet on the ground, my hand on the pulse of young people. People think I'm being patronizing when I say that I actually learn a lot more from my students than they do from me. But this is true because while my students may not have the training and experience I have now, in their youth they see the world differently, and in history that may spell the difference between fresh insight and basic research.

I recently assigned my undergraduate students to go over the correspondence of Rizal and choose any letter that they personally found interesting. Because Rizal's correspondence comprises about 954 letters more or less, and I didn't want to be flooded by 180 papers on one and the same letter, the students were instructed to choose a letter by (not "to") Rizal written on their birth month.

The results were amazing. I knew much of the material myself and could check if they were faking it, but for many of the students, reading Rizal's letters raw was like meeting him for the first time. It was an awakening of sorts as they encountered a human being, not a national hero.

The fact that Rizal was human, like you and me, is something we tend to forget. We often imagine that Rizal was made of bronze and stone, that he was a monument from the time of his conception.

Last week, two of my students came up to me after class with a volume of Rizal's correspondence and asked what I thought of a rather mushy juvenile poem that Ricardo Aguado dedicated to Rizal on March 19, 1877. At the time of its composition, Rizal was 15 years old, a student at the Ateneo Municipal and the verses read:

"Dedicated to Rizal by his classmate Ricardo Aguado, 19 March 1877. To my Dearest Friend Jose Rizal, on His Saint's Day, 19 March.

*"That merciful heart divine/ Now lovingly inspires/ My psaltery unrefined/ With voices my mind doth seek/ To sing its ardent love.*

*"Your pleasing image alone,/ In my soft heart always engraved,/ Now removes from me the fraud/ The loved star from sailor forlorn/ As in an agitated sea.*

*"For you're, sweet friend of mine./ The only joy of my soul./ And always to be with you/ Is my incessant desire/ In this sad, unfortunate land.*

*"But since my luck denies/ Me such happiness this day,/ My Muse with tenderness/ Its affection doth sent to you/ At this pleasant hour of joy.*

*"And cheerfully is content/ Kind heaven to implore/ To banish gloomy thoughts/ Away from your lusty soul/ And in it dwell peace and joy/*

*"That as the ardent rays/ Of the sun eclipse feeble stars/ With mortal grief,/ As with belles-lettres you leave/ Behind 'neath your footprints the rest.*

*"That such enthusiasm your years/ Frustration, wickedness, sad fears/ Without perturbing your peace/ Like a brook among flowers gay/ With thing of beauty pass by.*

*"And if one day finally/ The Just calls you to His/ Happy home of ineffable joy/ Your beautiful soul/ May enjoy celestial bliss."*

I didn't quite know how to react especially since the above verses come with a small note that reads, "Rizal, Yesterday I could not give it to you because it was not yet finished, and then I went out and had no more time. Don't show these verses to anybody, not even to one you trust most."

How could I have missed something as intriguing as this? When I returned to the office and pulled out my copy of Rizal's correspondence, there was a small note on the table of contents beside this letter saying, "Is there something more to this seemingly juvenile verse?" For me to speculate would prove to my critics that when I read documents, I actually add one plus one and get three.

Rizal's reply or his reaction to the above is lost to history. There is one other letter from Aguado to Rizal dated May 21, 1877 that relates the assault on the Luna home by bandits, but even here was a harmless line made meaningful by context. Rizal asked, "Who are the boys at your house?" Now, that I leave to the reader's imagination.

Before we read this in the context of "Brokeback Mountain" or "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," we have to guard against hindsight, or the use of 21st-century views on a document from the late 19th century. Maybe we need some background from Felix Roxas who was a student in the Ateneo Municipal at the time. He wrote:

"... It happened that at the age of 13 when we took up the study of our two classics—Virgil on the one side and Fenelon on the other—we staged a play about Olympus with goddesses, nymphs and nereids. Human nature takes its course and, for an infinity of reasons, this instinct develops until such time comes when passionate love letters are addressed to each other by fellow classmates."

At the time, when an all-boys school had a play, only boys were on stage, playing both male and female parts. The same was true of an all-girls school play. No wonder passions were aroused. So was there anything going on between Aguado and Rizal? I leave that to your imagination.

If my students learn how to read a document, analyze it inside out and form their own conclusions, this is definitely a lesson they will take with them for the rest of their lives.

* * *

*Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu*

# Scholars

**PINOY KASI**

*Michael L. Tan*

IT USED TO BE THAT PEOPLE WOULD BRING JEWELRY TO the pawnshops when they needed money. But these days, they bring their cell phones to the Greenhills Shopping Center to sell.

There's a whole section now of used (or, to use the nice term, "pre-owned") organizers, digital cameras and even an occasional laptop or two. On a recent visit, I noticed how some of the gadgets were practically brand new. I did wonder aloud to one vendor if they were "GSM" (*galing sa magnanakaw,* or hot stolen goods). The vendor gave me a hurt look, followed by a sad one, explaining in Filipino that they get more of these items around the month of May, the sellers needing cash to pay tuition fees.

This year more than in previous ones, I sense that Filipinos are finding it harder to keep their children in school. The really poor ones talk about pulling their children out of a public school. Tuition may be free but they can't afford the transportation, food allowance, books and supplies. What's shocking, too, are the number of middle-class parents who are transferring their children from private to public schools.

Government scholarships are hard to come by, so many of us have to take up the slack, often with poorer relatives. But I feel strongly, too, that if we do have the resources, we should also be helping those who are not related to us. The country's going to lag behind even more if we allow so much human potential out there to go to waste.

## Decisions

Given the number of people in need, it can be difficult making decisions on whom to support, what courses to take and in which school. I've learned, often the hard way, so I thought of sharing a few lessons I picked up with the ones I put through school.

First, whom to support? It's hard to say. "Bright" is difficult to measure, given that there are actually multiple intelligences. A kid may not be good in math, but excel in the arts, for example. Trust your instincts; I'd go more for diligence and an eagerness to learn.

Grade school, high school or college? I'd give first priority to support kids through high school or college, but I occasionally help out with a promising child in grade school. In many cases, investing in good elementary education means a strong foundation that can get a child into a government science high school, or into a state college later on, with lower tuition but with good quality education.

If you do decide to support someone for tertiary education, sit down with the student and the family to explore options thoroughly. Frankly, unless the child is exceptional, I wouldn't invest in a four-year course. Be extra careful about males; sadly, even poor families privilege their sons too much and they tend to just squander their opportunities.

## Ladderized education

If you do want to go for a four-year course, avoid "commerce" and "computer science" and other fads. Work out a ladderized arrangement that allows your scholar to obtain a certificate or diploma through different steps. Start out with vocational-type courses. Electronics is still a good one to go for, given how people are always looking for a good person to repair household appliances.

Perhaps the best initial "investment" is still a six-month caregiver course which could mean an overseas placement. (I say this with a heavy heart, but for so many families, this may be the only way to move out of perpetual dependency.)

After the six-month caregiver course, promising students can go on to take a two-year course in practical nursing or as a nursing aide. That can be followed by another two years to get a bachelor's degree in nursing. If the student really does well, hold your breath, you can go on to support him through medicine.

You can take a short cut (as I do), and simply support medical students. They tend to be a more mature and reliable lot, and these days, more genuinely interested in the profession than in finding a way to migrate.

## Schools

If you don't have anyone asking you for help, I'd advise you visit your alma mater or a school which you feel is worth your while, and ask how you can put up a scholarship fund. You can leave the screening to the scholarships office, although you can always give certain specifications in terms of grade requirements, courses, or even ethnic and religious background. I'm a firm believer in affirmative action, of giving an added advantage to those who have been marginalized by historical circumstances—Muslims, for example.

If you are supporting individuals on your own, take time out to help a scholar look for a school. There are so many diploma mills around. Be careful about schools that make extravagant claims such as instant employment. Be realistic with the prospects. A six-month caregiver course, for example, isn't enough for Canada, which requires two years of college units as well.

Visit the schools yourself to check out facilities, faculty, students. Probe into their tuition and payment plans. Go for paying an entire year's tuition since installment plans sometimes border on usury.

Also make sure to ask about incidental fees that might turn out to be more than incidental: for books, supplies, even computers for those computer courses. Always negotiate as well with the family about a local counterpart, taking care of allowances for example. But be prepared, too, for unanticipated expenses.

Find ways to check, regularly, on the student's progress. Don't wait until his grades come in to find out something had gone wrong. The scholar's needs go beyond the financial; for example, if the student comes from a low-income family, or from a rural area, you will need to keep encouraging the scholar and building his self-confidence, as he grapples with a new environment like UP or Ateneo.

You don't have to be rich to have scholars. Share what you can with poorer relatives, or children of your employees, taking care of just the tuition, or books. For older scholars, offer part-time work so they can feel they're supporting themselves.

Even fairly small amounts will go a long way. For example, UP suggests P50,000 to support a scholar's living costs for a school year. If I may appeal to overseas Filipinos, that's less than $1,000. At West Visayas State University's medical college, P20,000 pays for a year's tuition. That's less than $400.

It was P10,000 a year when I first pitched in with West Visayas. One of my scholars graduated last year among the top students in his class, and romped off with several awards as an outstanding intern, texting me as he got each award. He's now reviewing for the board exams.

Even in developed countries, there will always be good students who need just a little help to get going in life. For a country like the Philippines, doing our share, no matter how small, becomes a matter of national survival.

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# Dime-a-dozen politicians

I WRITE IN REFERENCE TO THE ARTICLE "BIR chief in hot water over poor collections." (PDI, 5/13/06) Rep. Joey Salceda's scathing criticism of BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) chief Jose Mario Buñag might have been meaningful if it had been made in the past. But today, it amounts to nothing but an angry and scornful, though completely irrelevant, remark.

Salceda ceased being an economist worth listening to quite a while ago. The reason? He has degenerated into a true politician (read: a "leader" who believes in self-interest first, second and always). Therefore, his opinions on economic matters must not be sought as they will always be politically tainted. It is the obligation of the INQUIRER—when trying to make a balanced news report about an issue—to listen to and publish the positions of people who make an honest, competent and relevant assessment of the issue; it should not bother with political statements that advance only the politicians' self-interests.

As we all know, politicians in the Philippines are dime a dozen. On the other hand, competent and decent professionals like Buñag are rare and valuable.

—**PATRICK HERNANDEZ-DEAKIN,**
**pdeakin@gmail.com**

## No compelling reason for moratorium on mining

WE HAVE READ WITH INTEREST THE editorial implying that the government faces a dilemma over the Lafayette mining issue. (PDI, 5/23/06) This, despite the fact that Malacañang has stated it is standing firm on its policy to promote mining and attract foreign investors, and that the answer to the public's concerns about mining is not a ban but the strict imposition of environmental standards and safeguards already in place, as well as the no-nonsense enforcement of laws.

Sagip Isla, Sagip Kapwa Inc., Ateneo de Naga University's Institute for Environmental Conservation and Research, has been critical of the mining industry from the start and has been opposed to mining in Rapu-Rapu even before Lafayette operated there. It is therefore not surprising that their arguments and advocacy make a case against the industry.

Also, please note that the Bastes Commission's report, which is supposed to be an "independent commission," followed closely the position of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. By tailor-fitting its findings to the views and opinions of the CBCP, the commission has sacrificed its objectivity and credibility.

By coincidence, the issues that came out in the report were the same as those raised by the NGO that questioned the constitutionality of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. They also echoed the same anti-mining sentiments articulated during the oral hearing of the case before the Supreme Court.

The Bastes Commission admitted that further studies will be needed to establish the causal connection between the incident and the alleged health and environmental implications. With the commission's conclusions not empirically established and merely based on assumptions and probabilities, we feel there is no compelling reason for a moratorium even if temporary. The final decision about this matter should come from the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), as chaired by the environment secretary, after it has undertaken all the necessary evaluation of the incident with proper regard to due process. We are sure that PAB's findings will be fair and just, and the company will abide by its decision.

In spite of the flaws, we consider the commission's report to be an important document in the sense that it has identified various issues and concerns worthy of consideration by the company and the whole mining industry. These issues are vital in our advocacy for responsible mining.

We assure you that mining companies are aware of their environmental and social responsibilities. They know the direct and indirect impacts of mining on the environment and how these can be managed through strict compliance of laws and application of modern technologies. They are also aware that over and above these concerns is the responsibility to use the country's God-given, natural resources for the betterment of our communities and people.

—**NELIA C. HALCON,**
**executive vice president,**
**Chamber of Mines of the Philippines**

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## Mayor in publisher's slaying surrenders

By Tonette Orejas
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE MAYOR SUSPECTED OF MASTERMINDING THE 2005 murder of a publisher in Aurora surrendered to the judge handling the case on Monday.

Dingalan Mayor Jaime Ylarde entered his second day in detention on Tuesday after he turned himself in to Judge Armando Yanga of the regional trial court in the capital town of Baler, Aurora.

Yanga said the mayor went to the court a few hours before a warrant for his arrest was issued on Monday.

Ylarde, who was charged with the murder of Starline Times Recorder publisher Philip Agustin on May 10 last year, would be arraigned today (May 24, Wednesday).

Amado de Luna, assistant provincial jail warden, said Ylarde spent the first night at the provincial jail's conjugal visiting room but has been assigned to Cell No. 8, a 2 meters by 3 meters room that he shares with six other inmates.

He was among the 85 detainees in the jail waiting time for court proceedings or serving sentences for criminal offenses, De Luna said, adding that no special treatment was being given to the official.

Supt. Teodoro Saclolo, Aurora police director, and Senior Supt. Perfecto Palad, deputy director for operations of the Central Luzon police, confirmed the mayor's detention in separate interviews.

De Luna said the mayor's mobile phones were confiscated but he was allowed to receive visitors, including local officials and teachers.

Ylarde declined interviews on Tuesday but told reporters earlier that he surrendered to be able to clear his name.

He told the INQUIRER that his political rivals stood behind the Agustin's family to oust him from office. Ylarde, a former policeman, is serving his second term.

Agustin was shot dead in his daughter's house at Barangay Paltic in Dingalan town, some two hours after arriving there to deliver the special edition of his newsweekly.

The paper carried stories exposing Ylarde's alleged misuse of funds intended for landslide victims.

Agustin was among the 42 Filipino journalists killed in the last five years under the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines.

Yanga on Tuesday also rued the refusal of the National Bureau of Investigation to present suspect-turned-witness Reynaldo Morete for the arraignment despite two court orders.

### Victim's kin appeal for swift justice

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Relatives of a murdered publisher in Aurora have appealed for justice on the first anniversary of his murder that has remained unsolved like the cases of 38 other Filipino journalists killed in the last five years.

Nenita Mendoza, sister of the slain Starline Times Recorder publisher Philip Agustin, said the family was expecting a "fair resolution" from the new panel of prosecutors assigned by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"We have waited long and all that we expect is a fair resolution," Mendoza said.

A previous resolution, which came on the eighth month of the preliminary investigation, excluded Ylarde from among the suspects but recommended his further investigation by the police and the National Bureau of Investigation. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

**TUPIG** VILLAMOR VISAYA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
**A vendor in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya displays the method she uses in cooking tupig, a native delicacy of rice cake with ground nuts, during the province's recent Panagyaman Festival.**

## ROUNDUP

### Alarm on stolen car

MISSING
Green & silver Crosswind

SAN PEDRO, Laguna—The San Pedro police office has issued an alarm on the recent theft of an Isuzu Crosswind XTO wagon owned by a Philippine Estate Authority (PEA) official. Police said the stolen vehicle is green and silver, bearing license plate XDC-151 and engine no. PS2940 registered under the name of Salvador Malvarosa. The report said the wagon was allegedly stolen while parked in front of the home of Juan C. Rana, PEA special assistant to the general manager at Chrysanthemum Vilage, Barangay San Vicente, San Pedro town at about 2 p.m. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Couple robbed of P4.3M

SANTIAGO CITY—A couple lost P300,000 cash and P4 million worth of checks to robbers in Barangay Mabini here on May 18. City police director Senior Supt. Rolando Diaz said businessman Raul Sison and his wife, Laila, were on their way home to Echague, Isabela province when the suspects shot the front tire of their car at about 3 p.m. When the car stopped, the suspects, who were armed with .45 cal. guns, shot but missed the couple. However, their driver, Percival Gaffud, was wounded. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

### 2 kids escape killer

PAGADIAN CITY—A 1-month-old baby and a 9-year-old girl escaped death when a man broke into their house and killed their mother and 4-year-old brother in Mahayag town in Zamboanga del Sur on May 20. Arlyn Paragoso, 35 and her son, died due to multiple stab wounds. The suspect, Teotimo Gumahad, 25, was arrested an hour later. Eufemia Yllanan, a relative of the victims, said the suspect barged into the victims' house and tried to rape the mother. The suspect allegedly stabbed the mother after she tried to fight back. Then he tried to kill all the children. Arlyn's son suffered nine stab wounds. The baby girl had five stab wounds, while the 9-year-old daughter escaped unhurt. *Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

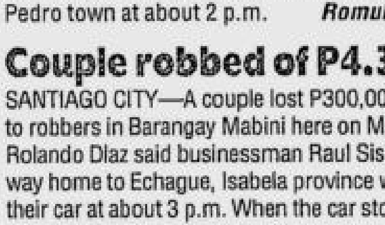
### Vendor shot dead

CABANATUAN CITY—Two days after the Diocese of Cabanatuan held prayer vigils to stop killings in Nueva Ecija, two armed men shot and killed a vendor at the public market here on Sunday. Police identified the victim as Nerisko Tunayan of Barangay Sanvermicristi here. In a pastoral letter, Bishop Sofronio Bancud of the Diocese of Cabanautan asked priests, lay ministers and Catholic faithful to ask for divine intervention on the killings, robberies and other forms of lawlessness in the province. This came in the wake of unsolved crimes here and in Gapan City. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

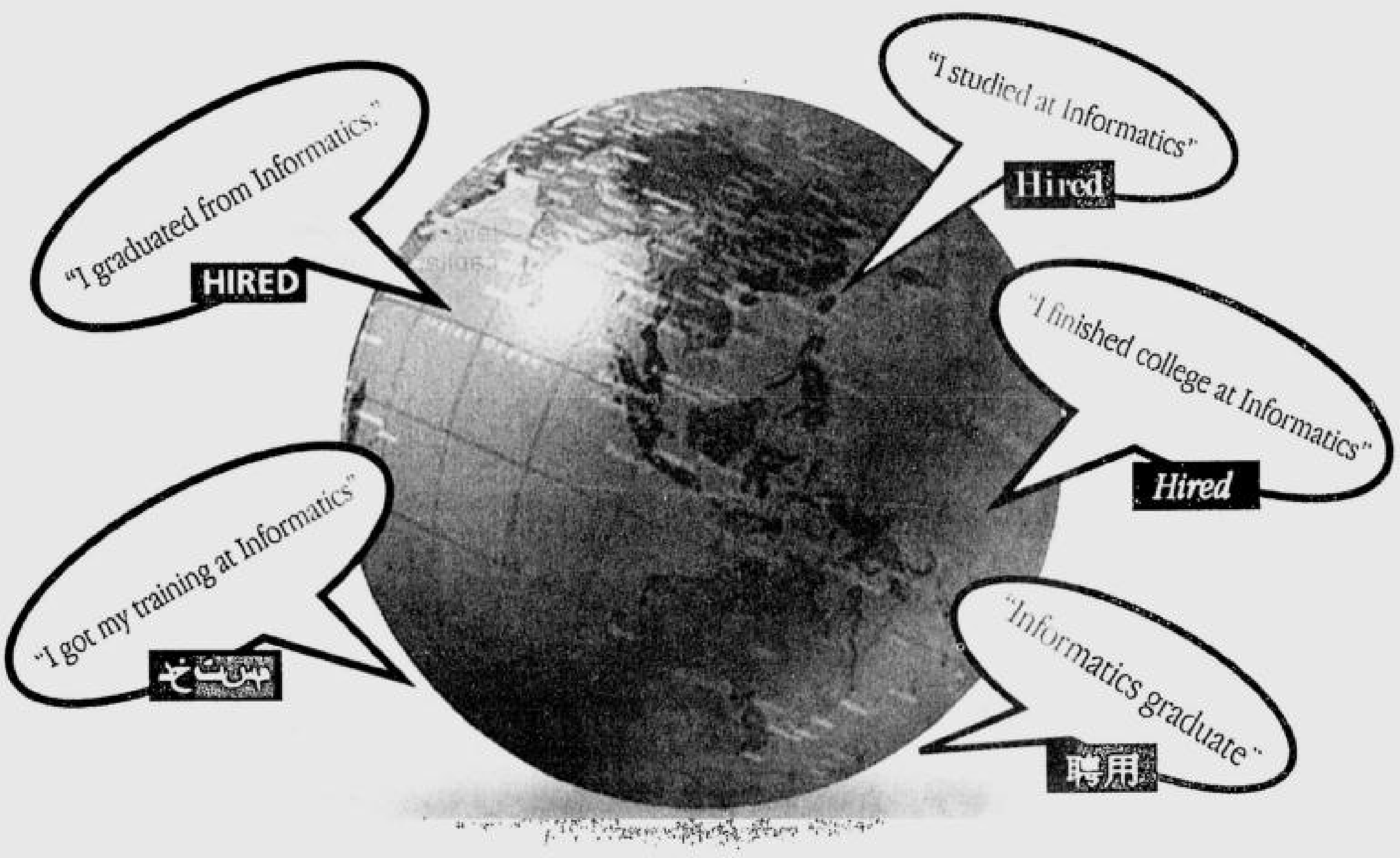
### Cop's son slain

ROXAS CITY—The son of a policeman here was shot dead by an unidentified person on Sunday. Noel Baydo, 23, of Urban Poor Barangay Milibili died upon arrival at the Roxas Memorial Provincial Hospital here. He succumbed to a lone bullet wound in the head. The son of PO4 Dodong Baydo, was playing bingo at the wake of his neighbor when a lone suspect, wearing black shirt and white short pant, appeared and shot him in the head. Police reports said the victim was allegedly involved in several robbery incidents which the police said could be the motive behind the killing. *Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

### Illegal car race stopped



LUCENA CITY—Police here claimed they have finally stopped the midnight car-racing along the highways here. "In the past week, gone were teenagers aboard their flashy race cars in their usual hangouts. They knew that the police were hot on their trail," said Lucena police chief Senior Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac. The racers, mostly youngsters from affluent families, regularly met in several gas stations along the diversion road, Quezon Ave. Extension in Barangay Gulang-Gulang and in the stretch of the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Silangang Mayao, all in the outskirts of the city. He said that lately, these racers tried to meet in other areas but were surprised when the police were there. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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# Pangasinan militants accuse cops of coverup

DAGUPAN CITY—MILITANT GROUPS in Pangasinan have assailed the police for supposedly trying to clear the Arroyo administration of responsibility in the killings of political activists.

In a statement, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Pangasinan (Bayan-Pangasinan) said the police's Task Force Doton, which was formed to investigate the murder of Bayan-Pangasinan secretary general Jose Doton, has effectively absolved the Arroyo administration when it cited Doton's involvement in politics as a possible reason for the attack.

"The task force's earlier pronouncement that a possible rift in local politics was the reason for Ka Jose's murder only showed the task force wanted to immediately clear the Arroyo administration of responsibility despite the absence of a deep investigation," the statement said in Filipino.

It also said the military's statements blaming the Communist Party of the Philippines' internal purge for the killings were aimed at diverting people's attention from the responsibility of the Arroyo administration for these attacks.

But Supt. Noli Taliño, head of the Task Force Doton, denied Bayan-Pangasinan's charges.

"We are looking at politics as only one of the many reasons which could be behind the killing. We are pursuing several angles," Taliño said in a telephone interview.

He said the task force is still investigating the murder and has not considered only one group behind the attack. "We considered politics because of some information we gathered that Doton was an active campaigner for a local politician in San Nicolas. Local politicians are very vocal about politics being the motive in the attack," Taliño said.

Doton will be buried at the San Nicolas town cemetery on Saturday.

In Bataan, about 1,000 members of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, farmers' groups and other organizations joined the funeral march for KPD organizer Annaliza Abanador on Tuesday. Abanador was gunned down in her office on May 18.

Leaders of the KPD and other groups assailed the Arroyo administration for allowing the military to sow terror among militant leaders in the country.

"This is a military campaign which the Arroyo regime had been tolerating for sometime now to silence militants," said Millet Morante, KPD secretary general.

Abanador was the third KPD member shot and killed in Bataan since last year.

"We are coordinating with some groups of concerned citizens to help us find justice for our slain colleague," Morante said.

A fact-finding mission by 11 groups led by the Citizen's Council for Human Rights (CCHR) gathered accounts linking the military to extra-judicial killings in Pampanga.

A survivor of an attempted murder on Jan. 31, 2005, in San Simon town and a witness to the Jan. 10, 2006 killing of farmer leader Antonio Adriales in Mexico town have identified two of the perpetrators as members of the Batu Brothers Group.

The group's members, according to testimonies of residents, have been seen in counter-insurgency operations by the Philippine Army in the villages.

The CCHR team said the group's members, who are former rebels, were reportedly involved in extortion and hired killings. *Tonette Orejas and Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

# ₱1.8M of small town's funds unaccounted for

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE TREASURER and revenue officer of Bacong town are under investigation for failing to account for P1.8 million of the town's money.

Bacong Mayor Rodolfo Yee said he formed an investigating team to look into the amount left unaccounted for by Bacong Treasurer Niceto Zamora and revenue collection clerk Guadalupe Sumagka.

The Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), following an audit last May 6, concluded that Zamora and Sumagka had failed to account for some P1.8 million.

Yee said the two were given enough time to replenish the amount that was discovered unaccounted for but failed to do so.

But in a report dated March 31, Zamora denied any wrongdoing and blamed Sumagka for the unaccounted funds.

Zamora said Sumagka has been allowing cash advances, even for the mayor, without his knowledge.

"I never authorized cash advances but only that considering that the one who obtained them from Sumagka and the collectors were high officials who impose their influence upon them, they could not refuse. Now it is just simply making the treasurer liable for acts committed by high officials of the LGU," Zamora said.

Zamora reminded the mayor that he, in fact, filed an administrative complaint against Sumagka on Aug. 15, 2005 at the mayor's office, but no action has been taken, prompting him to bring the matter to the Ombudsman.

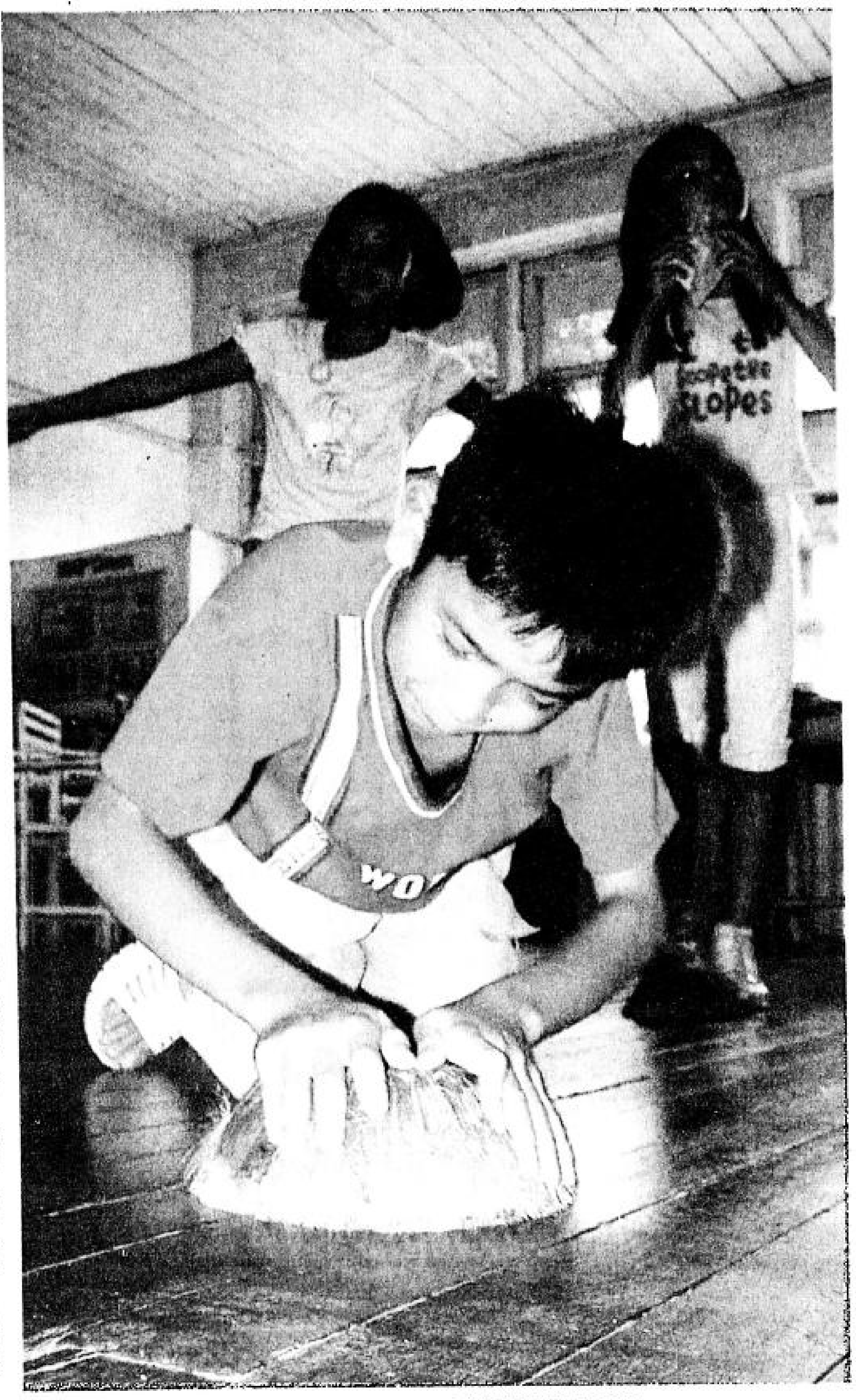
Vehemently denying the allegations, Sumagka, in her counter-affidavit, said "Zamora cannot avoid accountability by passing blame."

"I have no knowledge of any cash. I do not participate in cash in and cash out transactions," Sumagka added.

Municipal collectors, Sumagka said, deposit their cash collection at the bank and if there is any amount that was not deposited, the money will be turned over to the municipal treasurer, she said.

"What I received are documents, such as deposit slips, cash vales and cash advances slips from the collectors and municipal employees for purposes of recording and reporting. I therefore have nothing to do with any cash shortage," Sumagka said.

She also said that she has documents to prove that Zamora received money from municipal collectors.



**MANUAL LABOR** ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU
**A pupil uses a coconut shell to polish the floor of his classroom at the Jaro 1 Elementary School in Iloilo City. The government has resorted to tapping students and teachers for cleanup jobs in schools for lack of funds.**

# GMA heckler stands firm she did right

IMUS, CAVITE—A CONTROVERSIAL GRADUATE of the Cavite State University, who heckled President Macapagal-Arroyo during the school's commencement exercises last month, showed up at the provincial prosecutor's office here on Tuesday to face the charges the police filed against her.

Ma. Theresa Pangilinan, a mass communications graduate, filed her counter-affidavit at about 11 a.m. before Rusa Elmina Cataculan-Villarin, the Cavite assistant prosecutor, during the preliminary investigation of her case.

Pangilinan, along with fellow graduate Apolinar Dayandayan, was charged with public scandal by the Indang, Cavite police.

Also named respondents in the charge sheet were Sheryl Villegas, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Cavite; Marilyn Gonzales, chair of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW); and six other unidentified persons.

PO2 Russel Sierra, PO2 Sherwin Chavez and PO1 Houdini Cuevas of the Indang police station were the complainants in the said case.

Pangilinan, who gained national prominence after heckling the President, and her co-accused were joined by 15 other members of Bayan and SCW.

Lawyer Walter Go, counsel for Dayandayan, also showed up at the hearing.

Two members of the Indang police were likewise present at the prosecutor's office.

After almost one hour, Pangilinan and her group emerged from the prosecutor's office.

The next preliminary investigation was set on May 30, 2006.

Speaking with the INQUIRER, Pangilinan said she was not intimidated by the case which, she said, was nothing but a form of harassment and political repression.

She said she was prepared to face the consequences of her actions.

"I am not afraid because I did nothing wrong. What I did was to voice out the sentiments of millions of Filipinos who are dead tired of Ms Arroyo's lies," she said.

Pangilinan admitted that her parents were bothered with the filing of the case against her. "But they understood my situation after I explained it to them."

She then lashed out at Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez who, she said, used "the government's small machinery, like the local police, in intimidating critics of the government."

Pangilinan said instead of giving importance to her case and other political cases, the government should instead focus on how to provide for the basic education of the youth. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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**VISITING HOSPITAL SHIP**
A US Navy officer stands guard at the flight deck of the Medical Treatment Facility of the USNS Mercy. Inside the floating hospital is one of the largest trauma facilities in the United States. The ship offers a full spectrum of surgical and medical services. Patients primarily arrive by helicopter and sometimes by small boats.

# No charges filed yet for death of Capiz student in frat hazing

ROXAS CITY—AN ENGINEERING student who police said was killed in fraternity hazing was buried Saturday as no suspect in his death has been either identified or arrested.

Jan Angelo Dollete, a 21-year-old fifth year electrical engineering student of the Capiz State University (CapSU) was buried 15 days after he was killed in a hazing.

He was buried at the Divine Jesus Memorial Park.

But the Task Force Dollete (TFD), the lead investigator of the case, has yet to file a case against those behind his death.

Insp. Erwin Margarejo, TFD chief, said police have already identified four suspects. But police refused to reveal the identities as they collect more evidence.

Police said pieces of evidence and testimony collected so far lead to one angle—fraternity hazing.

Margarejo said the TFD is awaiting the results of an autopsy conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) before filing a case in court. The owner of the car used in bringing Dollete to the Mambusao District Hospital was already identified.

Results of an initial autopsy conducted by Dr. Owen Libaquin disclosed the victim died of a cardio-respiratory arrest. The official result, however, will be released on May 25.

Aside from the TFD, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Capiz committee on peace and order and police matter, conducted its own investigation.

The provincial board is planning to pass legislation that would make unlawful hazing in fraternities in the province.

The proposed legislation has the support of the police forces of the towns of Sapian, Mambusao and Roxas City and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and Traffic Management Group (TMG).

The TFD last week confirmed the existence of the Alpha Phi Omega (Apo) Fraternity at the Filamer Christian College here. The officers are Sylvester Bellosillo, grand chancellor; Phel Raff Patricio, prime chancellor; Archie Denolo, prefect; Christina Paula Fabros, scribe; and Jonathan Adjijil FCC teacher and Apo adviser.

Dollete's father, Jesus, a Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) detachment commander, said he discovered a letter in his son's closet applying for membership with Apo.

Dollete's body bore bruises. Police said the hazing was done in an open field of Sitio Busay Poblacion Sapian. *Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

# Nat'l gov't dared: Show sincerity on 'jueteng'

SANTIAGO CITY—TOP LOCAL officials of the province have turned the tables on the national government, saying it should show first its sincerity in curbing "jueteng," which has resurfaced in many parts of the country in the past three weeks.

Isabela Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca on Monday said the recent resurgence of jueteng in the province could have the approval of officials of the national government and the Philippine National Police.

"I am afraid that (the ones responsible) may be people of the PNP and I hope—really, really hope—that they have not the encouragement or tacit approval of top national executives," she said.

Padaca was reacting to news reports quoting anti-jueteng czar Edward Hagedorn as saying that only the law enforcement agencies and local officials could stop the illegal numbers game.

"Jueteng is back, has been allowed to come back, or even encouraged to come back. I hope the people who are behind this (would) stop playing innocent. *Huwag na nilang dramahan ang taong bayan* (They should stop fooling the people)," she said.

She said she was still awaiting results on her request for the relief of Senior Supt. Oscar Fiesta, acting Isabela provincial director, for what she called his "ineffectiveness" to stop the illegal lottery game in the province.

Alicia Mayor Napoleon Dy, president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines chapter in Isabela, stopped short of blaming the national government for its supposed indifference over jueteng, while passing the buck to local and police officials.

"This (anti-illegal gambling) campaign is not (the responsibility of the) PNP or the mayors alone. This is a national problem, so the national government should do something also," Dy told the INQUIRER.

He, however, admitted that some mayors have opted to "go back to the old ways" after operations of the Small Town Lottery, which the government intended as a legal substitute to jueteng, failed to take off in Isabela.

"We can no longer prevent (the mayors). We will be hypocrites not to admit that many of them are also going hungry," he said, without elaborating.

He said Isabela mayors had agreed to reject STL operations in the province after they discovered that the franchises had been awarded to gambling lords, purportedly with the use of dummy corporations..

Contacted through his mobile phone from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, Cagayan Valley police director, however, maintained that the police were "doing (their) best to contain the jueteng problem."

He cited the continued operations of an anti-illegal gambling task force sent by PNP chief, Director General Arturo Lomibao, which had arrested scores of bet collectors in a series of raids in various towns and cities here.

For his part, Fiesta insisted that they have been conducting daily operations on suspected jueteng areas but the raiding teams often encountered bet collection activities for EZ2 lottery, a government-sanctioned game. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

# *Top PNP exec tells cops housing units not for mistresses*

CALAMBA CITY—A TOP OFFICIAL of the Philippine National Police issued a reminder to all policemen applying for the PNP's housing program.

"Be sure that the house you're buying is for your legal wife and children," said Director General Oscar Calderon, the PNP deputy chief for administration and chair of the PNP housing board, on Thursday as he warned against erring policemen having extramarital affairs who are planning to avail themselves of the program.

"*Hindi pwedeng* 'number two' *ang tumira sa pabahay ng* PNP. Only the legal family of the policeman is allowed to stay at our housing projects," Calderon said, adding that the PNP never tolerates illicit affairs.

"*Isa lang dapat ang 'maybahay' ng pulis. Yung iba naman kasi may* condominium or apartment," he said in jest.

Calderon, widely touted as the successor of current PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao who is due to retire in July, was here as guest speaker at the induction ceremony of the PRO4 Press Corps on Thursday night.

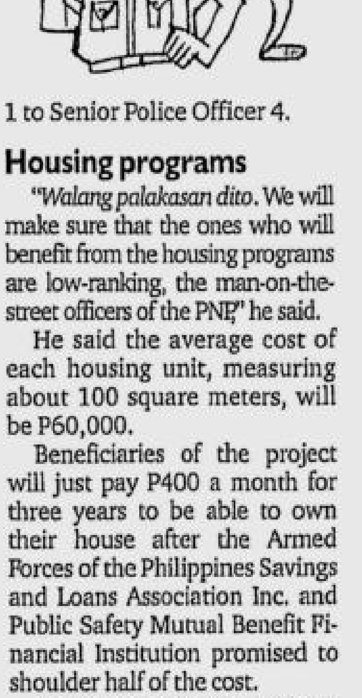
He said the PNP housing board has set stringent measures to make sure that nobody can take advantage of the project designed to help over 73,000 police personnel who do not have houses of their own.

"We have strict ground rules for this," he said.

The PNP, he said, has also created a screening committee which will scrutinize all applications for the project.

The committee will be composed of members of Gawad Kalinga, the PNP's private sector partner, one from the local government and another from the PNP.

Calderon said the project will prioritize low-salaried police officers from Police Officer 1 to Senior Police Officer 4.



## Housing programs

"*Walang palakasan dito.* We will make sure that the ones who will benefit from the housing programs are low-ranking, the man-on-the-street officers of the PNP," he said.

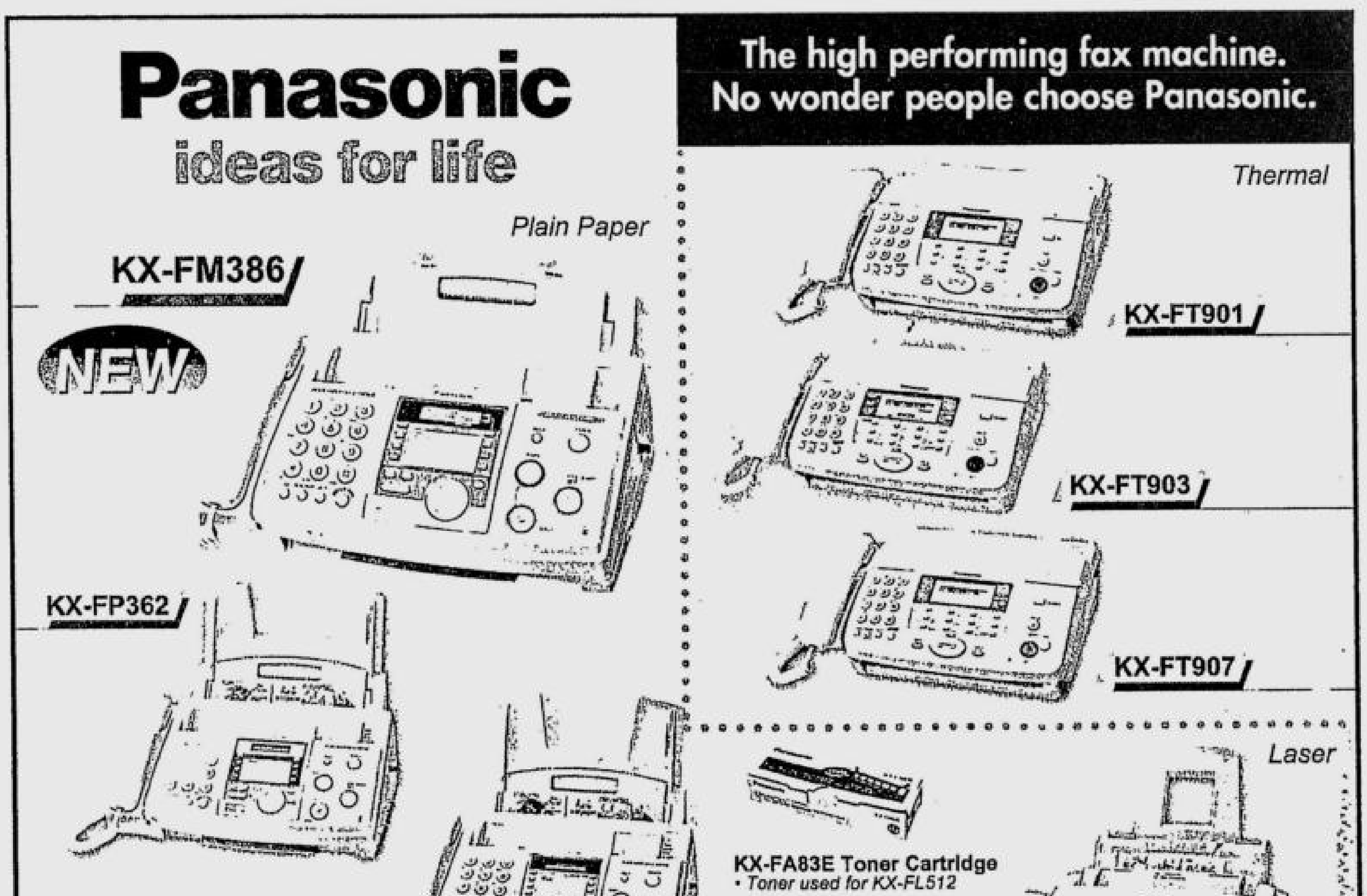
He said the average cost of each housing unit, measuring about 100 square meters, will be P60,000.

Beneficiaries of the project will just pay P400 a month for three years to be able to own their house after the Armed Forces of the Philippines Savings and Loans Association Inc. and Public Safety Mutual Benefit Financial Institution promised to shoulder half of the cost.

For junior officers, Calderon said they are planning to construct condominiums inside different police camps and government-owned lots in the country.

Initially, he said they are looking at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan as a pilot project in Metro Manila.

"We have to have a flagship in Metro Manila. If the plan pushes through, we will build eight four-story buildings inside Bagong Diwa," he said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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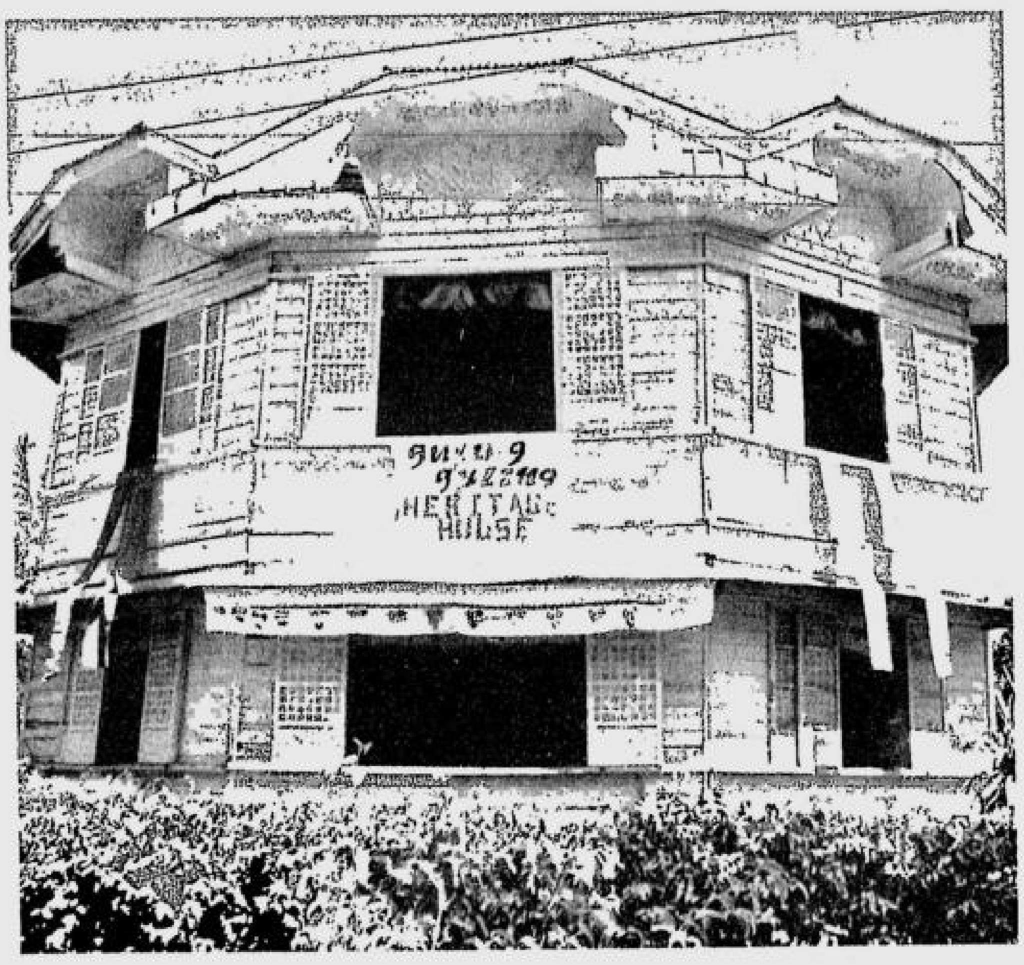
# Saving Paoay's old 'Duque House'

**By Cristina Arzadon**
*Paoay, Ilocos Norte*

OWNERS OF A HERITAGE HOUSE IN PAOAY, ILOCOS Norte are restoring the local landmark—a bubble-topped octagonal structure built by the late Constancio Duque, a school teacher, in the early 1940s.



**THE octagonal Duque House in Paoay, Ilocos Norte.** CRISTINA ARZADON

Locally known as the "Duque House," the American period architecture was given tribute as one of three heritage homes in Paoay, along with the well-preserved twin Bahay na Bato ("White Houses" to locals) owned by the family of Supreme Court Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales.

Duque was one of the Ilocanos who moved to the United States in the early 1900s. "He got the idea to go to the US because all his friends had left the Philippines," said his only son Estanislao, now a doctor based in Mindanao.

But unlike other Ilocanos who worked in sugarcane fields, Constancio, then a 16-year-old high school student enrolled in a seminary in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, flew to Chicago, Illinois, to continue his studies.

"He went there without knowing anybody. He used a one-year stipend that he had saved from the seminary for his plane ticket and start up his schooling," Estanislao said.

## American-inspired

Duque finished high school and college in the US before returning to Paoay in 1939 when he built the American-inspired colonial house.

"It was in Chicago where my father got the design for our house," said Duquesa Duque-Dugan, his youngest daughter who now lives in Australia.

"He always wanted to be different. At the time when the neighborhood houses were the typical box-type wooden structure, our father built an octagonal house using only his memory of the 20 years he stayed in Chicago," Dugan said.

"I remember when we were young, we would be asked where we live and we would say, *'Idiay nagbukel'* (There at the round house)," she said.

The old Duque was said to have hired skilled carpenters to execute the architectural design he had kept only in his mind. The house is made of wooden stone-cut facade with a bonnet of a roof.

Bubble-topped houses remain a landmark there, said his eldest daughter, Rosario Duque-Pobre, who visited Chicago recently.

The Duque siblings have kept all their father's memorabilia in their house, which has become a museum of antique pieces—from an old piano to a phonograph and other wooden furnishings.

Lining the walls are early family photos, including a sketch of the house done by Duque's granddaughter, Marissa.

The family plans to replicate the sketch in small keepsakes that could be given as souvenirs to tourists on a heritage trip.

## Promise

Dugan said restoring the house was a promise she made to her father before he died.

"I wanted to bring back my father to Chicago, while he was on a visit in Australia. But he never had that chance because he was in a hurry to go back to the Philippines. I have since promised to restore the house as my way of making up for him," she said.

Mindful of the attention that their house had attracted, the Duque siblings have started planning its rehabilitation, keeping in mind the need to preserve the original structure.

Termites have destroyed some sections, while wooden planks need to be replaced or reinforced. Except for some portions of the facade, the original structure, including the wooden floors, has not been disturbed.

Several flights of the stone staircase leading to the front door have sunk. Only sections of the pillars are seen on each side.

The basement has traces of hardened mud from recent floods, attracting termites, Dugan said.

## Restoration

The family had already commissioned a restoration architect to repair sections of the house.

Since talks about the restoration spread, Dugan said seven architects had shown up with their designs. Dugan had narrowed down her list to two.

"I could barely recognize our house," she said playfully as she showed two designs, which transform the house into a Spanish colonial villa capped by roof tiles.

Dugan clarified reports that the National Historical Institute had offered to help in the restoration of the heritage house. "Nobody has come forward to help in the restoration. There has been no offer, which we don't really mind," she said.

"And in case there will be one, we will like to see the guidelines first. We don't want to lose control of our house where we will be reduced to mere administrators," Dugan said.

She clarified, however, that the house was always open to people who shared their passion in taking pride of their ancestral home.

At one point, Irene Marcos-Araneta, youngest daughter of the late President Ferdinand Marcos, surprised the household members when she went up the staircase and asked politely if she could tour the house.

"We have always opened our house to everyone who cares to take a look. We don't mind the attention. Anytime of the day, we see people outside the house either taking shots or filming the structure. We share the pride to others who would want to make a connection and a sense of ownership to this house that our father built," Dugan said.

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# Clan reunions or village feasts?

**By Delmar Cariño**
*Bakun, Benguet*

**DAYTOY TI AMIANAN**

FOR BENGUET'S INdigenous peoples, a clan reunion means more than holding a feast to gather family members and butcher pigs.

The reunions, according to elders of Bakun town, are part of a tradition aimed at strengthening family ties and keeping intact a long line of native ancestry.

This summer, just like in previous summers, saw Bakun and the rest of the province's 12 towns play host to a lot of clan reunions. Family members who represented up to the fifth generation attended.

No exact figures are available, not even from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), on how many reunions were held in the province. But if the announcements on radio station dzWT of Mt. Province Broadcasting Corp. in Baguio City were to be the basis, the number peaked this summer.

Rose Malekchan, a dzWT reporter and anchor, said 195 announcements for clan reunions had flooded the station's public service hour from February to May. In April alone, she said, the station's hour-long public service just could not air all announcements.

## 3 reasons

Dr. Eufronio Pungayan, an ethnolinguist, said clan reunions were usually held for three reasons—"*iliw*" or the yearning to meet and be together with relatives, the sincere desire to gather all relatives for a feast, and the political agenda of some organizers.

The first two are quite difficult as a "*mangoton*" (kinship tracer) would be needed, said Pungayan, who also teaches at the Saint Louis University in Baguio. The "kinship tracer" is tasked with finding the origin of the clan and establishing the various generations that descended from it, he said.

Today, however, reunions are sometimes used to determine one's political base for future elections, he said.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

## Rich man's feast

He said modern day reunions in the province were actually modifications of the age-old tradition of "*peshet*" or "*pidit*," otherwise known as the rich man's feast. In this event, he said the "*kadangyan*" or "*kadangjan*" (rich man) calls for all his relatives to share his blessings.

"The practice is inherited by incoming generations and this could become burdensome," he said.

The practice dates back to the 16th century, according to the 1985 book, "A People's History of Benguet," by Zenaida Hamada Pawid and Anavic Bagamaspad.

The *peshet* is a "feast where pigs are butchered upon the instruction of an unnamed god to a favored mortal for the purpose of sharing his bounty to his neighbor," Pawid and Bagamaspad said.

Lawyer Leilene Marie Carantes-Gallardo, NCIP director in the Cordillera, agreed with Pungayan that today's clan reunions had become variations of the old rich man's feast.

Today, all families in the clan are required to contribute for the food and drinks to be served, thus unloading the burden of the wealthy family member in shouldering alone the cost of the reunion, she said.

A reunion may not be as elaborate as the "*kanyao*" (or *cañao*), a feast of song and dance, but clan members have welcomed the affair since it has helped them learn genealogy and establish a family tree.

The officers of the clan will also have to learn how to make their constitution and by laws, said Alfredo Alangdeo, a vegetable trader from Bakun and president of the Tayo-o clan.

## Way of life

Alangdeo said the clan's younger generations had already gained some insights on their elders' way of life. Among them are their ancestors' preference for big families as family planning was then nonexistent, most of their ancestors have single names, and extended families are allowed.

This explains why clan reunions could gather so many families and that making a family tree "is actually making a thick book," he said, adding:

"In fact, we have learned that bearing illegitimate children was then allowed especially among wealthy families."

The Tayo-o reunion on April 9 was just one of the five clan gatherings held in Bakun this summer. Around 200 families belonging to the clan attended, Alangdeo said.

Those who came to attend represented up to the fourth generation, he said.

The Lovenie-Molintas clan of Kapangan town also had its 25th reunion on May 6. The venue had to be the President Fidel Ramos Gymnasium in Baguio City because of the number of families who came.

"Every time we hold the reunion, more and more people are attending," said Susan Dawang, one of the clan officers.

Reunions are usually held in a day although some hold it for more than two days. The families usually choose public school grounds as venue to accommodate participants, Alangdeo said.

Those who attend must register with their respective clans identified by colored ribbons. After an opening program, they are presented.

A grand lunch follows. For some, sports activities are held in the afternoon. To cap the event, officers are elected and the place of the next meeting is agreed upon.

Officials and would-be politicians have all reasons to smile when attending their own clan reunions. The number of families present would mean sure votes, Pungayan said.

# Rapu-Rapu's local execs now want Lafayette to stay

From page A1

in from Manila to meet with Lafayette officials and employees and local leaders to "validate" the report submitted by the probe body to Malacañang on Friday.

TURNAROUND: DENR Secretary Reyes at the mine site with local Rapu-Rapu officials who are now asking his office and Malacañang to allow Lafayette to resume operations when, only six months ago, they were gathering signatures to evict the Australian-owned mining company. NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

The RRFFC, chaired by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, had recommended the revocation of Lafayette's environmental compliance certificate and a moratorium on mining in Rapu-Rapu, as well as a review of the Mining Act of 1995 which allows foreign companies to fully own and control mining projects in the country.

The provincial board of neighboring Sorsogon passed a resolution expressing strong support for the commission's recommendations.

"We are having this dialogue so that in the end, we can come up with a reasoned and sound judgment of what to do. Everybody deserves a fair hearing," said Reyes, who will have the final say on the fate of Lafayette as the DENR chief and the PAB chair.

## 'Good points'

Reyes said he saw some "good points" in the report submitted by the commission. But he refused to cite specific aspects that, he said, might be adopted by the government in coming up with a decision.

"Definitely, we will profit from the findings of the Bastes Commission, but I don't want to make any premature disclosure yet," he said. It "did give us additional points of view and matters to think about."

The bishop earlier declared that he would write President Macapagal-Arroyo a "strongly worded letter if the government totally ignores the commission report."

In Manila, Malacañang yesterday said it would allow Lafayette to resume operations as long as the company cleans up the mine tailings spill and installs the safeguards required by the DENR.

## Fair to foreign investors

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the government should have an even-handed policy and treat foreign investors with fairness in explaining why the Palace junked the commission's recommendation to permanently shut down mining operations in Rapu-Rapu.

The DENR earlier rejected Lafayette's request for a test run of its copper and zinc processing facility as Reyes waited for the recommendations of the RRFFC.

## Remediation check

On Monday, Australian Ambassador Tony Hely urged the government to allow Lafayette to conduct the test run after fulfilling all of the requirements set by the DENR.

"We'll look into that. The officers of the company claim that they have put up about P400 million in remediation measures that will have to be verified. If they (DENR officials) are satisfied with the compliance, we believe that a resumption should be in order," Bunye said.

Lafayette officials said they spent P400 million in the last six months to put in place the remedial measures required by the PAB, including raising the tailings dam from 122 meters to 135. The dam's height was expected to be 145 meters in July.

The company has submitted to the DENR a status report detailing its completed remediation, along with a request for a temporary lifting of the cease-and-desist order to pave the way for the test run.

Its officials have expressed confidence that the incidents that caused fishkills in the coastal community on Oct. 11 and 31 last year, would not happen again with the mitigating measures in place.

"The mistakes they (fact-finding commission) cited in their report were mistakes that we have already pleaded guilty to and spent the last six months addressing," corporate secretary Julito Sarmiento said.

"What we ask is to be given a chance to prove that we can make this [project] a new benchmark for responsible mining," he said.

## A second chance

Despite last year's mine spills, Bunye said the administration's policy on foreign investments in mining remained the same—"to encourage sustainable mining and [if there are] any specific deficiencies in any particular operations then the deficiencies must be properly remedied."

He said the Bastes Commission should also respect the Palace's position on the issue. "We have to balance everything, we also have to treat investors with fairness and see to it that those who are observing proper environment safeguards are encouraged to perform their operations."

Even the vice chair of the commission agreed that the technology was available to prevent the same incidents that cost Lafayette its discharge permit and chemical control order, as well as P10.7 million in fines for violating the Clean Water Act.

"Everybody deserves a second chance, but everybody must be responsible," Charles Avila said here yesterday.

While he maintained that there were "more people with antimining sentiments when you go outside [Lafayette's compound]," Avila said that everything was possible if Lafayette would spend the money for the technology to prevent another illegal mine tailings discharge.

## New Filipino management

Yesterday, Reyes inspected the mining facilities to check on the compliance by the company with the standards and conditions set by the government. He also spoke with barangay officials and residents to get their reactions to Lafayette's presence.

Councilor Barranda said the municipal government changed its stand on the mining project after dialogues with the new Lafayette officials last month.

"The company's new Filipino management under Mr. Carlos G. Dominguez has shown sincerity, transparency and is demonstrating that it's different from the previous management," the council said in its resolution.

## Real estate tax

Barranda said the company had agreed to sign a memorandum of agreement with the municipal government for the remittance of real estate taxes to the municipality despite its exemption from paying the taxes by virtue of a certification from the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

"This will be on a yearly basis. We will pay them a portion—maybe at least half—of what we would have been otherwise exempt from paying," corporate lawyer Bayani Agabin said.

The Philippine government has granted Lafayette exemptions from real estate taxes, customs duties and the value-added tax during its project period, prompting the municipal government to declare that the project was not benefiting the local communities.

Officials of Barangays Pagcolbon and Binosawan also made a strong appeal to Reyes to allow the immediate resumption of mining operations. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

# New contraceptives make menstrual period optional

From page A1

done," she says.

A college student and retail worker in Lisbon Falls, Maine, Sardinha uses Nuvaring, a vaginal contraceptive ring. After the hormones run out in three weeks, she replaces the ring right away instead of following instructions to leave the ring out for a week to allow bleeding.

## Great for marriage

She says it has been great for her marriage, preventing monthly crankiness and improving her sex life. "I would never go back," says Sardinha, who got the idea from her aunt, a nurse.

Using the pill or other contraceptives to block menstrual periods is becoming more popular, particularly among young women and those entering menopause, doctors say.

"I have a ton of young girls in college who are doing this," says Dr. Mindy Wiser-Estin, a gynecologist in Little Silver, New Jersey, who did it herself for years. "There's no reason you need a period."

## Continuous-use pill

Such medical jury-rigging soon will be unnecessary. Already, the Seasonale birth control pill limits periods to four a year. The first continuous-use birth control pill, Lybrel, likely will soon be on the US market and drug companies are lining up other ways to limit or eliminate the period.

Most doctors say they don't think suppressing menstruation is riskier than regular long-term birth control use, and one survey found a majority have prescribed contraception to prevent periods. Women have been using the pill for nearly half a century without significant problems, but some doctors want more research on long-term use.

The new methods should be popular. A nonscientific Web survey for the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals found at least two-thirds of respondents were bothered by fatigue, heavy bleeding, "really bad cramps" and even anger. Nearly half said they would like to have no period at all or decide when to have one.

For some women, periods can cause debilitating pain and more serious problems.

Two recent national surveys found about one in five women have used oral contraceptives to stop or skip their period.

## Withdrawal bleeding

"If you're choosing contraception, then there's not a lot of point to having periods," says Dr. Leslie Miller, a University of Washington-Seattle researcher and associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology whose website, noperiod.com, explains the option.

Miller points out that women on hormonal contraception don't have real periods anyway, just withdrawal bleeding during the break from the hormone progestin.

According to Miller, modern women endure up to nine times more periods than their great-grandmothers, who began menstruating later, married young and naturally suppressed periods for years while they were pregnant or breast-feeding. Today's women may have about 450 periods.

## Over-romanticized

Still, surveys also show most women consider monthly periods normal. Small wonder: Girls learn early on that menstruation is a sign of fertility and femininity, making its onset an eagerly awaited rite of passage.

The period is "way over-romanticized," says Linda Gordon, a New York University professor specializing in women's history and the history of sexuality.

"It doesn't take long for women to go from being excited about having a period to feeling it's a pain in the neck," says Gordon, author of "The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America."

According to her, caution is needed because there's not enough data on long-term consequences of using hormones continuously. Gordon notes menopausal women for years were told that hormone drugs would keep them young—until research uncovered unexpected risks.

"People should proceed very cautiously," she says.

Today's birth control pills contain far less estrogen and progestin than those two generations ago, but still increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and blood clots.

The pill should not be used by women who have had those conditions, unexplained vaginal bleeding or certain cancers, or if they are smokers over 35.

## Benefits

But there are benefits from taking oral contraceptives too, such as a lower risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer, osteoporosis and pelvic inflammatory disease.

And forgoing periods means no premenstrual syndrome and a lower risk of anemia and migraines, says Dr. Sheldon Segal, coauthor of "Is Menstruation Obsolete?" Segal has been involved in research for several contraceptives.

Almost since the first pill arrived in 1960, women have manipulated birth control to skip periods for events such as a wedding, vacation or sports competition. Female doctors and nurses were among the first to block menstruation long-term to suit their schedules, says Susan Wysocki, head of the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health.

"They were then more comfortable recommending it to their patients," says Wysocki, who uses a vaginal ring to prevent menstruation.

## Momentum

The idea gained momentum after Barr Pharmaceuticals launched Seasonale in November 2003. It's a standard birth control pill taken for 12 weeks, with a break for withdrawal bleeding every three months. Amid wide acceptance by doctors, sales shot up 62 percent last year, to $110 million.

Publicity for Seasonale made women wonder: If just four periods a year are OK, why have any at all?

Users of Pfizer Inc.'s Depo-Provera, a progestin-only contraceptive shot lasting three months, usually are period-free after a year or two. There's now a generic version, but the drug can thin bones.

And many women have been getting extra prescriptions so they could continuously stay on birth control pills, the Ortho Evra patch or the vaginal ring, rather than bleeding every fourth week. That schedule was set by the original birth control designers to mimic normal menstrual cycles. But the extra prescriptions have led to insurance company hassles.

"What Seasonale did is get rid of that nuisance," says Dr. Peter McGovern of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

New extended cycle contraceptives will do the same. Wyeth is hoping by late June to get Food and Drug Administration approval to sell Lybrel, its low-dose, continuous birth control pill; approval also is pending in Canada and Europe.

Also in June, the FDA should decide whether to approve Implanon, a single-rod, three-year contraceptive implanted in the upper arm that maker Organon USA has been selling it in Europe for a decade.

Berlex Inc. is developing its own birth control pill for menstrual suppression.

Barr, aiming to be a leader in extended contraception, last November bought the maker of ParaGard, an intrauterine device that blocks periods in some women. Barr's new product Seasonique, a successor to Seasonale, likely will get federal approval at week's end. AP

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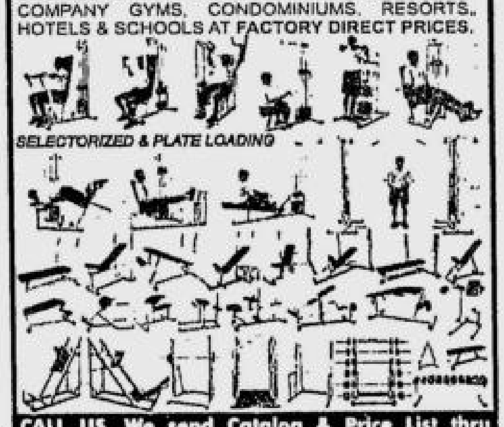

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# Bali-type blasting caps seized

## NBI probes maker's links to Jemaah Islamiyah, terrorist bombing attacks

By Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED A MAN CAUGHT manufacturing blasting caps similar to the ones used in the Rizal Day bombings that killed 22 people and wounded 120 others in various parts of Metro Manila in 2000 and in the terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 189 people in the Indonesian island resort of Bali two years later.

The National Bureau of Investigation identified the alleged explosives manufacturer as Rodolfo Arahan, whom it presented to the media yesterday, four days after his arrest during a raid on his house and shop in Barangay Hulugan, Tanza, Cavite, last Friday.

"We are now determining his possible linkage to the Jemaah Islamiyah because the blasting caps he made were identical to those used in the Rizal Day and Bali bombings," NBI acting director Nestor Mantaring told reporters.

Seized from the 45-year-old suspect, who claimed he manufactured blasting caps for dynamite fishing only, were big plastic bags of highly explosive TNT, potassium nitrate, picric acid, pentaerythritol tetranitrate and low explosive black powder along with 37 blasting caps, 247 blasting cap casings, 23 time fuses, metal sheet cutters and molding machines, officials said.

"All these chemicals combined are enough to destroy a quarter of the whole NBI headquarters," said Romeo Cotingjo, an NBI explosives expert.

Two weeks ago, NBI detectives posing as buyers obtained from Arahan a bottle of ammonium nitrate mixed with kerosene that is often used in blast fishing, the officials said.

Carlo Valdez, chief of the NBI's Anti-Terrorism Division, said they had received information that Arahan "sells his products to clients in Basilan and Jolo," known lairs of the Abu Sayyaf Group that is linked to the Southeast Asian terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah.

Vasquez said the NBI was coordinating with the Australian Federal Police to determine the similarities between the substances used in the Bali bombing and those seized in the Cavite raid. Arahan denied the accusations, saying that "Visayan friends" gave him the explosives materials.

The NBI said charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives have been filed against Arahan.

# Makati judge firm on decision to inhibit herself

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MAKATI JUDGE JENNY LIND ALDECOA DElorino has stood pat on her decision to voluntarily recuse herself from the rebellion cases against party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran and rebel soldier 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

On Monday, Delorino denied an appeal from Beltran that she reconsider her May 10 decision to inhibit herself from the case, which resulted in the case being transferred to another judge.

In her May 10 order, the judge voluntarily inhibited herself from the case, saying she did not want to cause delays in proceedings as she expected state prosecutors to always cast doubt on her impartiality.

The Department of Justice had asked Delorino to let go of the case on the ground that she was biased after the judge rejected their proposal to include 46 new accused in the rebellion case, alleging a conspiracy between rebel soldiers and communist rebels to overthrow the administration President Macapagal Arroyo.

"The judge maintains that even in the absence of bias or partiality on her part, there are other just and valid reasons which, in conscience, have guided her to exercise the better part of discretion by voluntarily inhibiting herself from this case. Let it not be said, however, that she succumbed to any extraneous pressure for, indeed, there was none," Delorino said.

The judge ordered that the court records be immediately transferred to the sala of Makati RTC Judge Encarnacion Moya, who was designated to take over the rebellion case after it was again raffled off on May 15.

Delorino threw out on May 4 the modifications that the DOJ had made on the original case—which sought to include party-list legislators Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, Liza Maza of Gabriela and 41 others—saying she found that the amended case contained new theories and new facts which could not supplant the original case against Beltran and San Juan.

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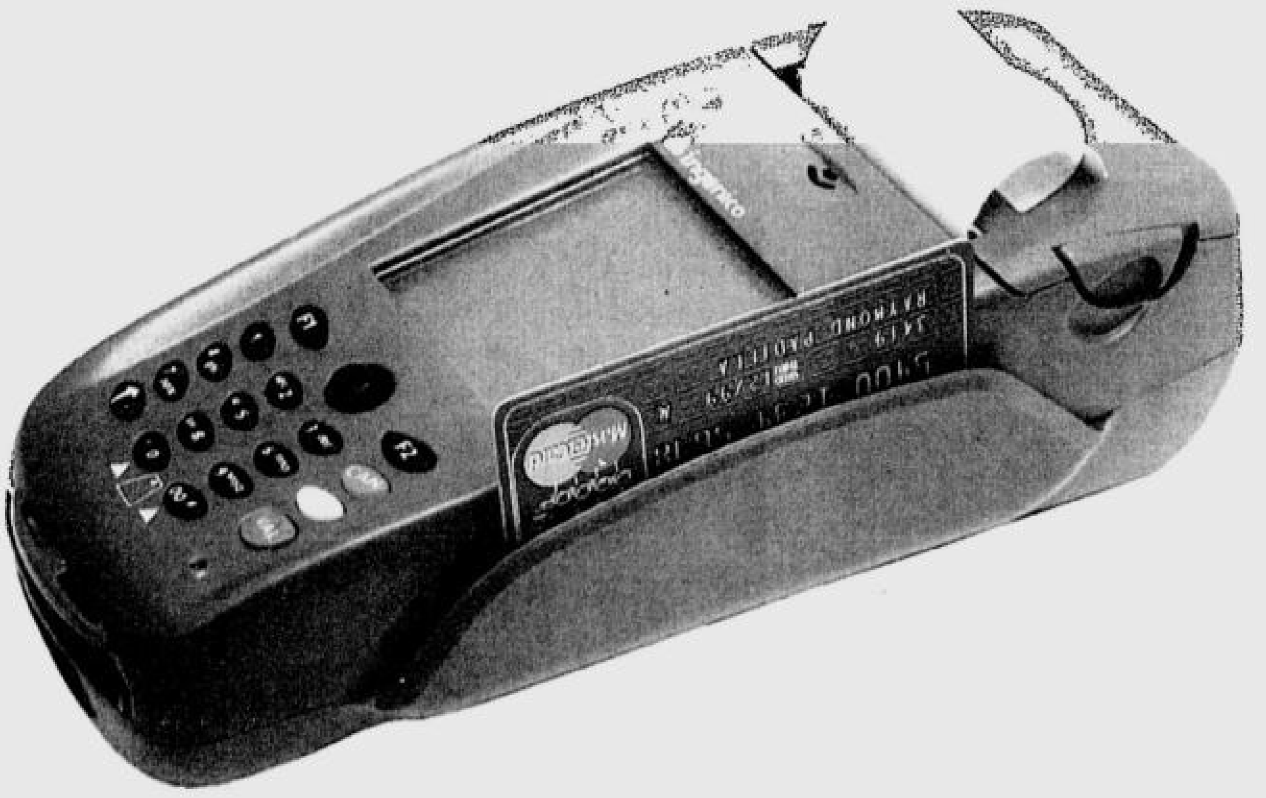

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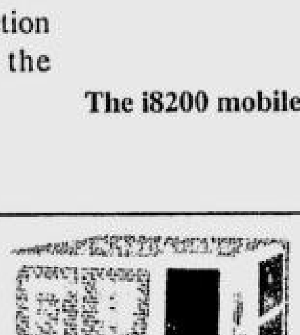
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Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**
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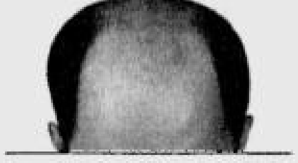

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# Juday pleads not guilty to tax evasion raps

## Judge sets next hearing on June 22

**By DJ Yap and Melissa de Quiros**

WITH A NEW LAWYER IN TOW, actress Judy Ann Santos pleaded not guilty during her arraignment for tax evasion charges in the Court of Tax Appeals in Quezon City yesterday.

The arraignment finally pushed through after Santos' original counsel, Bonifacio Alentajan, withdrew from the case, citing "ethical considerations."

Presiding Justice Ernesto Acosta accepted Alentajan's withdrawal, which was filed the day before, and recognized lawyer Remigio Michael Ancheta as the new counsel for the actress.

Santos had been accused of tax evasion for allegedly declaring a gross income of only P8 million for 2002, although she actually earned P16.4 million.

According to the BIR, this resulted in a total income tax deficiency of P2.7 million, a charge Santos had denied in previous interviews.

Alentajan, meanwhile, said he withdrew from the case because there were too many people around Santos who were talking to her about legal strategies, without first informing him out of professional courtesy.

But he added that even if he had withdrawn from the case, he still believed that the actress' case was "winnable."

Both Ancheta and Santos declined to comment on Alentajan's withdrawal.

"The case is complicated enough as it is. I respect the judge and hope that this will soon be over," Santos said.

Ancheta asked the court for at least two months to prepare for the pre-trial, but Justice Acosta said it was too long, adding that the actress was entitled to a speedy trial. The next hearing was set on June 22.

Before his withdrawal, Alentajan had made several attempts to prevent the arraignment, including a motion to quash the proceedings based on the argument that the court had no jurisdiction over the case.

**SANTOS: Her first lawyer quit due to "ethical considerations."**

# *Manila theaters stop showing 'Da Vinci'*

**By Tina G. Santos**

AFTER FIVE DAYS OF screening "The Da Vinci Code," moviehouses in Manila yesterday stopped showing the controversial film.

The city government had earlier threatened to shut down theaters featuring the film, which is based on the best-selling novel of author Dan Brown.

"So far, all theater owners have complied. We have strict orders from the mayor to take drastic action should movie house owners ignore the directive," said Dante Cubacub, acting head of the complaints section in the City Hall's Bureau of Permits and Development Office.

### Offensive

Last week, the City Council passed a resolution prohibiting the showing of the movie, saying it was "a crime to exhibit films which offend a religion."

"The movie is undoubtedly offensive and contrary to established religious beliefs which cannot take precedence over the right of the persons involved in the film to freedom of expression," the resolution read.

Some movie house owners, however, continued to show the film, saying they would only comply if the city government were to pass an ordinance and not just a resolution.

### Stiff penalties

This prompted Mayor Lito Atienza to order Secretary to the Mayor Emmanuel Sison to write a letter directing theater owners to stop the showing of the film. Those who defy the resolution, he added, would face imprisonment of one year and a fine of P5,000.

Directed by Oscar Best Director Ron Howard and starring Oscar Best Actor Tom Hanks, the movie was given an R-18 rating by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

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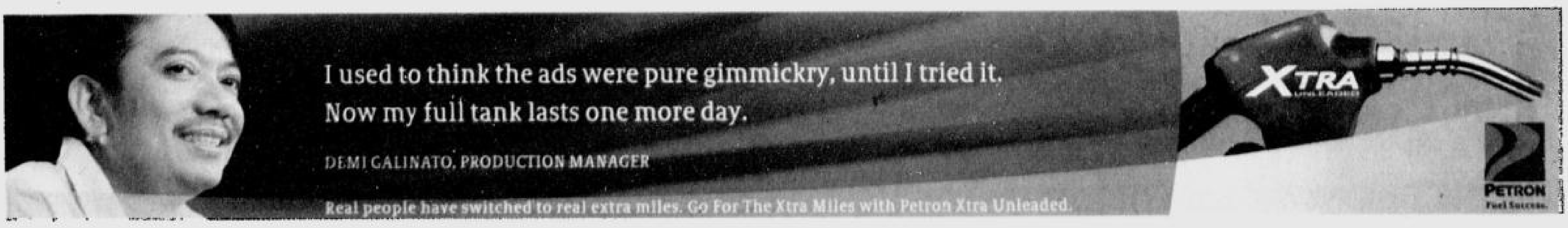

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# German sues tabloid for libel

By DJ Yap

A GERMAN BUSINESSMAN HAS filed a P100-million libel suit against six persons who allegedly took part in a smear campaign that portrayed him as a pedophile, including the editors of a tabloid that printed the story.

Michael Heinen, 62, accused Ben Lorque, an engineer, and Mark Barican, president of the "Advocate for the Protection and Welfare of Children," of besmirching his reputation through a news story that appeared in the tabloid Remate on May 2.

Also named in the complaint filed by Heinen in the Quezon City prosecutor's office were Susan Cambri, Remate managing editor and circulation manager, as well as several John and Jane Does representing the publisher, editor and writer of the tabloid.

Apart from the criminal complaint, Heinen demanded payment of P100 million in moral damages.

The story which appeared in the tabloid quoted Barican as saying that Heinen often misrepresented himself as a captain in the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary when dealing with children whom he was about to "victimize."

It also quoted Lorque as claiming that Heinen had been arrested in 1997 on a rape charge involving minors and was the subject of a standing warrant of arrest issued by a Manila court.

Heinen, who said he has been living in the country for the past 11 years, denied the charges in the story which also appeared in other tabloids, including Bulgar and Pilipino Star Ngayon.

He said he had obtained membership in the PCG Auxiliary because of his co-authorship of the Philippine Merchant Marine Rules and Regulations of 1997, but he denied he ever introduced himself as a captain or wore the uniform of one for that purpose.

Heinen also denied ever being charged with or arrested for rape or having a pending arrest warrant.

He said he knew Lorque, a former president of the Profound Master Training Center, with whom he had a labor dispute involving Lorque's claim for wages.

Heinen added that he did not know Barican or his group.

# Trike driver killed while helping 2 persons

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TRICYCLE DRIVER NOEL PANACA, 33, only wanted to help.

But he was killed when he tried to help a fellow driver and his granddaughter who were electrocuted by a high tension wire in Pasig City the other day.

Gil Lucay Lucay, 58, a tricycle driver, was waiting for passengers with his three-year-old granddaughter, Rhea Domingo, at around noon Monday.

## Explosion

Both were seated in the tricycle which was parked in a terminal on Jenny's Avenue in Barangay Rosario when they heard an explosion.

The sound came from one of three high tension wires of the Manila Electric Co. which were connected to a 20-foot-high concrete post.

Seconds later, one of the wires snapped and hit the roof of Lukay Lucay's tricycle.

Panaca tried to help the two but was also electrocuted.

PO2 Lardy Ignacio said bystanders rushed Panaca to the Pasig City General Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

Lucay Lucay and his granddaughter were brought to The Medical City where they are under treatment for severe burns.

Meralco, meanwhile, said it has already sent a team to repair the wires.

# QC gov't stops work on condominium

A CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER has been ordered to stop work in Xavierville Subdivision, Quezon City, after a 400-kilo slab from the building fell onto an adjacent house two weeks ago.

Fortunately, no one was hurt in the incident although the house owned by Clarissa Fortuna, a doctor, sustained a lot of damage.

The Quezon City Office of the Building Official (OBO) issued a cease-and-desist order (CDO) on May 15 against the developer and contractor of the 25-story Regina Condominium, which is under construction in the subdivision.

The condo is being developed by BANFF Realty and Development Corp., under contract with Megawide Construction Corp.

On May 12, a slab of "pre-cast material," measuring nine-by-four feet, fell from a crane at the sixth floor of the condominium, onto the roof of the house at 33 Collantes Street.

The huge slab tore through the roof and destroyed the ceiling of one of the bedrooms. Luckily, the slab caught on the wooden support of the ceiling and stopped it from crashing into the floor. The impact, however, sent pieces of plywood onto the bed, nearly hitting Fortuna.

Accompanied by her sister-in-law Tati, who lives in the same house, Fortuna said she and other homeowners complained about the incident before the OBO, prompting city officials to issue a CDO.

But work on the construction site continued, Fortuna noted, adding that the crane even went beyond the site perimeter.

Because of the violations, project engineer Leonardo Paule and civil engineer Donato Ragudo were arrested and detained over the weekend, according to Fortuna's lawyer, Francis Rivera.

At a hearing yesterday at the OBO, architect Edgardo del Rosario clarified that the CDO meant that no type of construction was allowed as long as the order remained in effect. *Melissa de Quiros*

Republic of the Philippines
**SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM**
Makati City

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Petitioner,

– versus – SSC CASE NO. 8-15993-05

MT. HALCON SECURITY SERVICES, INC.
and its officers/directors, namely:
EFREN D. VILLANUEVA, JOY
BERNARDO M. BALAQUIT,
NOEL V. ABOBOTO, JOANNA MARIE V.
DE JESUS, ALEX M. ARANAS, SARAH V.
FERNANDEZ and CARLOS M. CASTRO,
Respondents.
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

## SUMMONS

To: MR. NOEL V. ABOBOTO

GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Bldg., 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino Street, Makati City, your Answer to the petition filed by the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS for brevity), which in substance claims that you violated the provisions of the SS Law, as amended, by your failure and refusal to remit to the SSS the SS contributions for your employees, to pay the corresponding penalty that have accrued thereon and the salary/calamity loan amortizations due and despite receipt of the demand letter you still fail to comply with your obligation to the SSS.

You are further required to serve a copy of your Answer upon the counsel for the petitioner, Atty. Digna B. Piano-De Alban with address at 2nd Floor, ECC Building, 355 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or **motu-proprio**, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence ex-parte and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, Philippines, May 8, 2006.

***SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION***

(PDI – May 24, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
3/F Building 6, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, 1003 Manila
Trunk Line 743-8301 locals 1650, 1651 & 1652; Fax: 741-9775
URL: http://www.doh.gov.ph; e-mail: ogec@doh.gov.ph

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health, through its Central Office Bids and Awards Committee (COBAC), invites consultants/firms to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted, to bid for the hereunder project:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Project | : Electrical Engineering Consulting Services for Evaluation of Site and Buildings and Preparation of Plans for Electrical System Improvement of DOH Central Office |
| Brief Description | The Consulting firm shall undertake the task of inspecting existing buildings at the DOH, Sta. Cruz, Manila and designing of electrical systems improvement which shall include the entire external and internal wiring within the DOH compound and buildings |
| Approved Budget For the Contract | One Million Seventy-Five Pesos (Php 1,075,000.00) |
| Source of Funding | Government of the Philippines |
| Contract Duration | One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days |

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant, qualification of personnel and current workload. Only three (3) to five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE). Bids whose technical proposals pass the minimum technical rating of 75% shall have its financial proposals opened and evaluated. The technical proposal shall carry 70% weight in the bid evaluation.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

| | Activities | Schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility | June 1, 2006 |
| 2 | Issuance of Eligibility Forms | June 1, 2006 |
| 3 | Submission of Eligibility Requirements | June 19, 2006 |
| 4. | Results of Eligibility Check | June 19, 2006 |
| 5. | Results of Short Listing | July 12, 2006 |
| 6. | Issuance of Bid Documents | July 12, 2006 |
| 7. | Pre-bid Conference | July 25, 2006 |

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at 3/F Bldg. no. 6, Procurement Division, Department of Health, Sta. Cruz, Manila, upon submission of a letter of intent. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office.

Bid Documents will be available only to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00) to the Department of Health, Cashier's Office.

The Department of Health assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, COBAC

(PDI - May 24 & 31, 2006)

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# METROBRIEFS

## Check your bottled water

THE PASAY City Health Office yesterday warned residents against buying bottled water with not-so-familiar brands. "We are not sure if these products have undergone the proper water purification process as prescribed by the sanitation code," Neil Sabino, a city health inspector, said yesterday. The advisory was issued after the City Council passed a resolution ordering the Pasay CHO to conduct a monthly inspection of all water refilling stations in the city. Sabino said there were at least 80 to 90 water delivery businesses registered with the city's Business Permit and Licensing Office. "We always check the results of the bacteriological exam conducted by Department of Health-accredited laboratories on the water sold by these establishments every month," he told the INQUIRER. Sabino, however, admitted, that it was not easy to pin down fly-by-night water refilling stations unless residents cooperate with authorities.

*Jocelyn R. Uy*

## Victims fight back

A BIG-TIME labor recruiter, who allegedly duped close to 600 victims of P25 million, was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila last Sunday. NBI acting director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspect as Faridah Kanda alias Tiffany Balboa, owner of the Tierra Mar Manpower Recruitment Agency at the third floor of the Kimvi Building on Ma. Orosa Street in Ermita, Manila. An investigation conducted by the NBI National Capital Region Office headed by Regional Director Ruel Lasala showed that the suspect had recruited several applicants for overseas employment, offering them jobs as waiters, cooks and hotel staff in Iraq and Dubai. Kanda promised the victims monthly salaries ranging from $400 to $1,700 and demanded P15,000 to P100,000 in processing and placement fees. Her victims sought the help of the NBI when she failed to live up to her promises.

*Margaux C. Ortiz*

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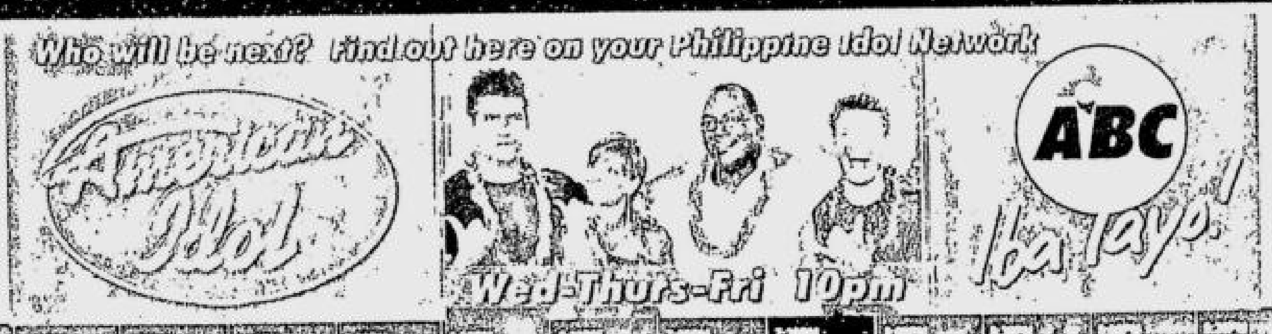
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

# TV GUIDE

Wednesday, May 24, 2006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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABC 5 | | | | National Geographic | PBA | | | | Sentro | PBA | | | | | Big News | American Idol | | | |
| ABS-CBN 2 | Kapamilya Cinema | | | Pasion de Amor | Little Amy | Mr. Bean | Naruto | Outstanding Twins | TV Patrol World | | Bituing Walang Ningning | Sa Piling Mo | Pinoy Big Brother | Panday | Wonderful Life | S.O.C.O. | | | Insider |
| AXN | | CSI: NY (Season 2) | | The Amazing Race (Season IX) | | The Amazing Race (Season IX) | | Beastmaster (Season I) | | Pensacola (Season III) | | 30 Seconds To Fame | Samsung Sports World | Maximum Exposure (Season I) | | CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6) | | CSI: Miami (Season III) | |
| Cartoon Network | Police Academy | Richie Rich | Tom & Jerry Show | Baby Looney Tunes | Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi | Codename: Kids Next Door | The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy | The Simpsons | | Power Rangers Ninja Storm | PokeMon | Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel | | The Simpsons | | Mucha Lucha! | Duck Dodgers | Justice League | Samurai Jack |
| Cinema One | | Daddy's Little Darling | | | | Himala | | | | Squala | | | Persona | Saan Nagtatago Ang Pag-ibig (8:15 PM) | | | | Yes Darling Walang Matigas Na Pulis | |
| Cinemax | | | The Naked Gun From The Files Of Police Squad! | | | Dead Canaries | | | 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea (6:25 PM) | | | The Big Red One | | | | Devour (9:50 PM) | | Dead On Arrival II (11:15PM) | |
| CNN | | Business International | | World News | World Sport | Larry King Live | | Business International | World Sport | World News Asia | | World News | World Sport | World News Asia | World News Asia | Your World Today | | | |
| Crime/Suspense | | Cold Case | | Law & Order: Special Victims Unit | | Profiler | | Forensic Files | I, Detective | Law & Order | | Law & Order: Special Victims Unit | | The Watcher | | | | Bones | |
| Discovery Channel | | Da Vinci Declassified | | American Chopper | | Kapow! Superhero Science | | In The Eye Of The Storm | | Wild Discovery | | Hour China | | The Ultimate Guide | | Weather Extreme | | World's Strangest UFO Stories | |
| Disney Channel | Mr. Bean: The Animated Series | Totally Spies | Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny | Mickey Mouseworks | Lilo & Stitch | Martin Mystery | Totally Spies | Kim Possible | Mr. Bean: The Animated Series | That's So Raven | Cadet Kelly | | | American Dragon | Buzz on Maggie | Kim Possible | Totally Spies | Inspector Gadget's Last Case | |
| ESPN | | Pro Billiards '04 Trick Shot Magic NY, USA | | Pool: Snooker World Pool Masters '05 UK | | | Motorsport Asia | Table Tennis '05 [illegible] | Motorsport Asia | Pool: Snooker World Pool League '03 Poland | | Pool: Snooker World Pool League '03 Poland | | Sportscenter Asia | Classic Boxing Ali vs. [illegible] II | | Classic Boxing Ali V. Frazier | | Sportscenter Asia |
| ETC | | Will & Grace 4 | Friends 10 | Change of Heart | Elimidate | Blind Date | Fifth Wheel | Seinfeld | Ambush Makeover | The Tyra Banks Show | | Veronica Mars 2 | | Beach Girls | | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | The Tonight Show With Jay Leno | |
| ETC 2nd Avenue | | Starting Over | | The Maury Povich Show | | The Jerry Springer Show | | Dr. Phil | | NBC Nightly News | The Inside Edition | The Ellen Show | | Wheel Of Fortune | Jeopardy | Cold Turkey | | NBC Nightly News | The Inside Edition |
| EWTN | St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman | Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus | Faith In Motion | Truth In The Heart | Rosary With Mother Angelica | EWTN Gallery | Suffering And The Love Of God | EWTN Catholic Classic | The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges | Mother Angelica Live Classics | | Daily Mass Live | | Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus | One In Their Hands: Holiness Of Priesthood | Parable | Rome Reports | EWTN Presents | |
| Fox News | | On The Record With Greta Van Susteren | | The O'Reilly Factor | | Your World With Neil Cavuto | | Fox & Friends | | | | | | Fox News Live | | | | | |
| GMA 7 | Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM) | Now and Forever (3:15 PM) | Endless Love 1 Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand | | Saiyuki | Dragonball Z | Gokusen | 24 Oras | | Extra Challenge | Majika | I Luv NY | Love Of The Condor Heroes | Jewel In The Palace | | Nuts Entertainment | | | Saksi |
| Hallmark Channel | | Mcleod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM) | | Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women Of Camelot | | | | Bewitched | The Nanny | Judging Amy | | Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II | | Judging Amy | | Empire | | | Judging Amy (11:45PM) |
| HBO | | | | Betrayal | | | Love At First Bite (5:45 PM) | | | | Beverly Hills Cop II (7:20 PM) | | | Honey | | | Nick Of Time | | |
| Hero TV | Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters | Yakitate! Japan | Mr. Ajikko | D.I.C.E. | Samurai Deeper Kyo | Angelic Layer | Tokyo Underground | Metal Fighter Miku | Beyblade G-Revolution | Yu-Gi-Oh GX | Naruto | Mamo de Pon | Inuyasha | Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters | Yakitate! Japan | Mr. Ajikko | D.I.C.E. | Samurai Deeper Kyo | Angelic Layer |
| IBC 13 | | EZ Shop | | | | Home Shopping Network | IBC Express Balita | TV Infomercial | | Japan Video Topics | | ME TV | | PTA Best Of The Philippines | | Up Close And Personal | IBC News Tonite | Home Shopping Network | |
| JackTV | The Daily Show With Jon Stewart | The Late Show With David Letterman | | Heat | | Velocity | | X-Men | Street Smarts | Mad TV | | That 70s Show | My Name Is Earl | The Late Show With David Letterman | | The Daily Show With Jon Stewart | Premium Blend | Primetime Glick | Chappelle's Show |
| Lifestyle Network | | 30 Minute Meals | Wolfgang Puck | Sweet Dreams | Smart Solutions | Sensible Chic | Designing Cents | Bill Boggs Corner Table | Unwrapped | Food 911 | E! Entertainment Special | | Style Star | Martha | | Fine Living Special | | Intimate Portrait | |
| MTV Philippines | | Laguna Beach | | MTV Screen | Pop Inc. | | MTV Hits (with SMS) | | | Get Spotted | Get Hitch'd | MTV Screen | Moto Ask Hoobastank | TRL | | Laguna Beach | | MTV Summer Concert | |
| MYX | | Rock MYX | My MYX | Mellow MYX | Urban MYX | Take 5 | MYXILOG | MYX Firsts | Star MYX | OPM MYX | Pop MYX | MYX Daily Top Ten | | MYX Live! | | Urban MYX | My MYX | MYX Backtrax | MYXILOG |
| National Geographic | Wildlife Diary | Nat'l Geographic Specials: Cheetahs | | Hidden Worlds: Australia's Dingo Island | | Bees Vs Hornets | Planet Wild S1-04 Foxdog | Top 5 - About Egypt: Egypt Eternal | | WOW! Giant Otters | | About Asia: China Unbound Sex and the Revolution | | Planet Football Was World Cup Class #1 | Planet Football Was World Cup Class #2 | Summits From Disaster: Alpine Tsunami | | | |
| NBN | | Teledyaryo Alas-Tres | | Teledyaryo Sports [illegible] | | | [illegible] | Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] & Angelique Lazo | | Tinig ng Bayan (Live) | | | | Teledyaryo Final Edition | | | | Bantay OCW With Susan K | |
| Nickelodeon | Chalkzone | Hey Arnold! | SpongeBob SquarePants | My Life As A Teenage Robot | All Grown Up | The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron | The Fairly Odd Parents | Drake & Josh | Naturally Sadie | Romeo | All That | All Grown Up | As Told By Ginger | Four Eyes | SpongeBob SquarePants | The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron | The Fairly Odd Parents | My Dad The Rock Star | |
| PBO | | | Avandonada | | | | 23rd Floor | | | | Working Girls | | | | Noel Juco 16 | | | | |
| Qtv | Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin | | Zipang | Kaleido Star | MMS (My Music Station) | | Moms | | Magic Ring | Irene | Noel | Project 11 | Now Na! | | News On Q | Balikbayan | | Irene | Over The Green Fields |
| RPN 9 | | | | | | Global Window | RPN Aksyon News | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | NBA Series/Conference Finals | | | | | | Newswatch Now | Cargo For Truth | | Kerygma |
| SBN 21 | | | | New Life TV Shopping | | | | Winner TV Shopping | | Quantum Global | | Oras Ng Himala | | Oras ng Katotohanan | | SBN Music Video | | | |
| Solar Sports | | | | | | 2006 ABC Wmn Dbl, SF Men Single SF, Wmn Single | | | | Sagupaan | Boxing: Marco Antonio Barrera Vs. Rocky Juarez | | | | | | Solar Sports Desk | PBO recap Day 1 | NBA Action |
| Sports Plus | | Arena Football League | | | | | | | | NASCAR Nextel Cup: All Star Challenge Charlotte | | | | | | | | | |
| Star Movies | | First Knight (3:15 PM) | | | | | Commando | | | Mighty Joe Young (7:05 PM) | | | | Creep | | | The World Is Not Enough | | |
| Star World | | The Bold & The Beautiful | | General Hospital | | American Idol | | The Simpsons | Malcolm In The Middle | Star News Asia | Seinfeld | American Idol/ Beauty And The Geek | | Grey's Anatomy | | Smallville/ The Apprentice (Series 4) | | Seinfeld | American Idol/ Beauty And The Geek |
| Studio 23 | Bewitched | Yu-Gi-Oh 3 & 4 | | | | Batman Beyond | Xiaolin Showdown | Spirits | Pinoy Big Brother | Wazzup Wazzup | World's Craziest Videos | | CSI (8:20 PM) | 24 Season 4 (9:10 PM) | | News Central | Oprah | | Just Shoot Me |

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

# Amnesty accuses US, Britain of war on terror abuses

LONDON—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL on Tuesday accused the United States and its main ally Britain of jettisoning human rights in the wars they have declared against terrorism.

In its annual report, Amnesty lashed out at the US government for holding thousands of people without charge or trial in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Guantanamo naval base in Cuba, since the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States.

The London-based human rights group also took British Prime Minister Tony Blair's government to task for its security crackdown following the July 7, 2005 suicide attacks in London that killed 56 people, including the four bombers.

"Measures purporting to counter terrorism led to serious human rights violations, and concern was widespread about the impact of these measures on Muslims and other minority communities," the report said.

The developments were part of a broader trend, it added.

"The (British) government continued to erode fundamental human rights, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, including by persisting with attempts to undermine the ban on torture at home and abroad, and by enacting and seeking to enact legislation inconsistent with domestic and international human rights law," it said.

The report referred to an antiterrorist law adopted in March, before the bombings, which allow the government to use secret documents to impose "control orders" that sharply restrict the movement and communications of suspects who have not been tried.

A new law was adopted at the end of the year which extended the time that suspects could be detained without charge from 14 days to 28 days.

However, it noted that the British parliament rejected a more draconian proposal to extend detention periods to 90 days.

It also denounced the British government for striking agreements with Jordan, Libya and Lebanon that allow for sending security suspects to those countries based only on diplomatic assurances that they would not be mistreated.

It accused the Blair government of allowing the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to use British territory to transfer security suspects between countries, outside any legal framework.

And it accused the British authorities of breaching international and domestic human rights law "through its role in the internment without charge of at least 10,000 people in Iraq." The United States—which has received loyal support from Britain in its war on terror following the September 2001 attacks—was charged by Amnesty with human rights abuses not only in known jails but also in "secret" prisons. *AFP*

## *2,148 executed in 2005*

LONDON—AT LEAST 2,148 PEOPLE were executed in 2005 despite the majority of the world's countries having abolished the death penalty in law or in practice, Amnesty International said Tuesday.

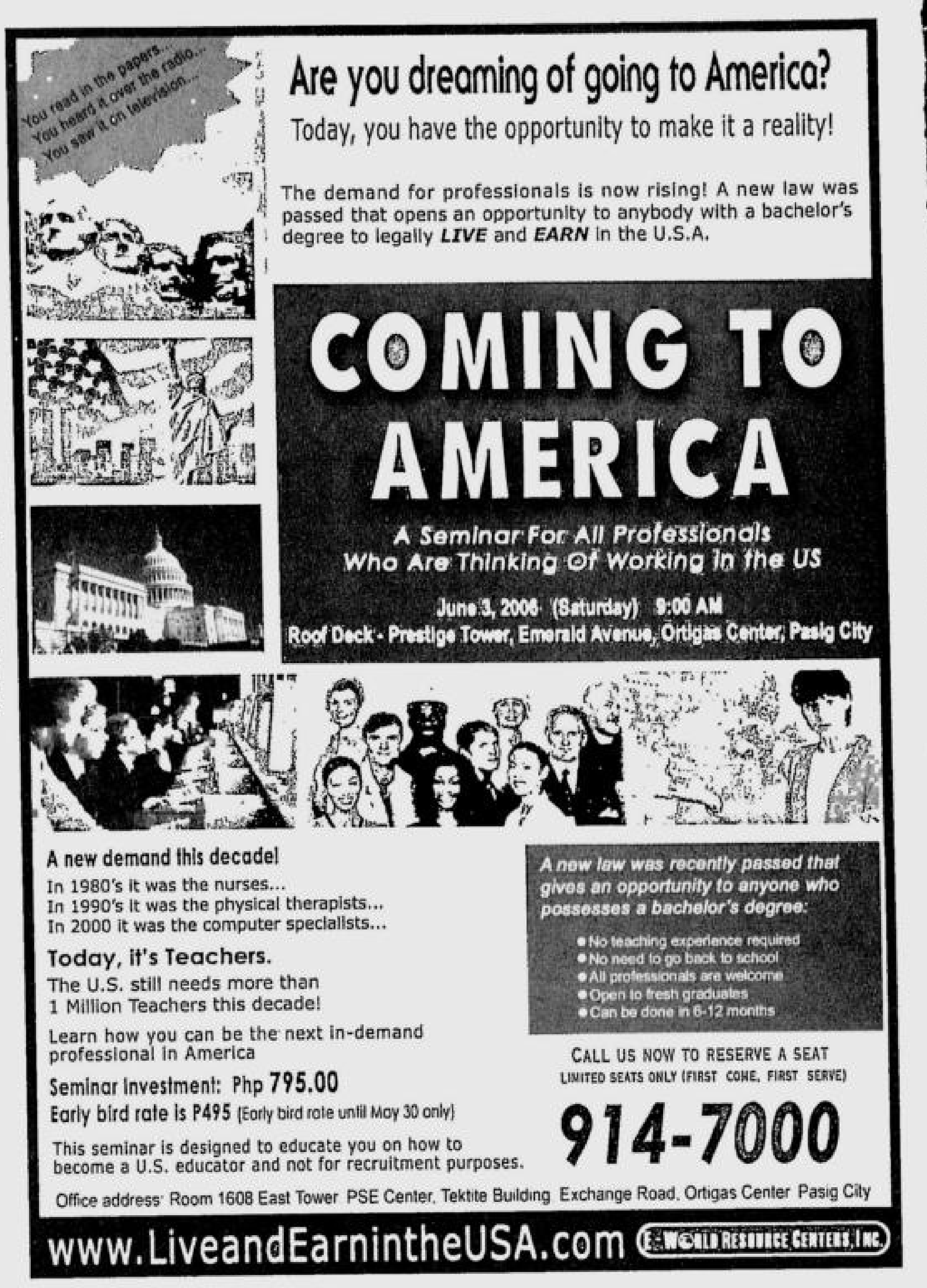
In its annual report on the state of the world's human rights, Amnesty said that at least another 5,186 people were sentenced to death last year, though "the true figures were certainly higher."

Amnesty said 122 countries have now abolished capital punishment in law or in practice. Some 86 of those countries have got rid of the death penalty for all crimes.

Executioners used various means, including hanging, firing squads, lethal injections and beheading. Among those put to death were children and people with mental disabilities, Amnesty said. Ninety-four percent of executions took place in China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United States.

Drug smuggling, embezzlement and fraud were some of the crimes for which capital punishment was imposed, Amnesty said. Mexico and Liberia abolished the death penalty for all crimes in 2005, Liberia being the last to do so in September.

Amnesty raised its particular concern over the inherent risk of executing innocent people. *AFP*



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# Air raid kills 80 Taliban, 16 civilians in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR—UP TO 80 TALIBAN rebels and at least 16 civilians were killed Monday during a coalition air and ground attack on a village in southern Afghanistan, officials and witnesses said.

The US-led coalition said it called in warplanes after troops who were trying to capture insurgents in Kandahar province came under fire, while a governor said some of the militants had hidden in local people's houses.

Bloodied men, women and children who streamed into a nearby hospital using vehicles that withstood the bombing said dozens of civilians died and scores more were wounded.

The air strike came amid some of the worst violence since the 2001 fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Around 300 people have been killed in the past week, about twice the number reported killed in Iraq.

"Coalition forces conducted a significant operation early this morning in the Kandahar region near the village of Azizi that resulted in the unconfirmed deaths of possibly up to 80 Taliban members," a coalition statement said.

There were 20 confirmed deaths among "active members of the Taliban network" and 60 unconfirmed fatalities in the operation, the third in the area in a week.

"The purpose of this morning's operation was to detain individuals suspected of terrorist and anti-Afghanistan activities. However, during the operation, coalition forces encountered organized armed opposition," it said.

"Ground and close air support assets engaged the extremists, who were firing on coalition troops and endangering innocent civilians," the statement added.

The coalition said it was investigating reports of civilian deaths. Its troops "only targeted armed resistance, compounds and buildings known to harbor extremists," the statement said.

Kandahar provincial governor Asadullah Khalid told reporters that at least 16 civilians were killed and 15 wounded in the attack.

"There were reports that the Taliban were in this village but when the US planes started bombardment the Taliban used the people's houses as a front—that's why there were civilian casualties," Khalid said at the main hospital in Kandahar city, 35 km east of the bombed area.

An elderly man, Attah Mohammad, told an AFP correspondent at the hospital that 24 members of his family, including some children, were killed in the bombing. *AFP*

## WORLDBRIEFS

### Suharto bleeding internally

JAKARTA—Indonesia's former dictator Suharto was bleeding internally in the stomach Tuesday and his condition appeared to be worsening, doctors said. Suharto, 84, was hospitalized two weeks ago for colon surgery and has undergone several minor operations since then. Mardjo Subiandono, the chief presidential doctor, told reporters the ex-strongman started bleeding in the stomach again late Monday. "We are giving him medication to try to stop the bleeding," he told a news conference, adding that Suharto's health appeared to be deteriorating. "We will conduct an endoscopy to locate the source of the bleeding." Subiandono said Suharto looked "weak and pale." *AP*

### 14 killed in attacks in Iraq

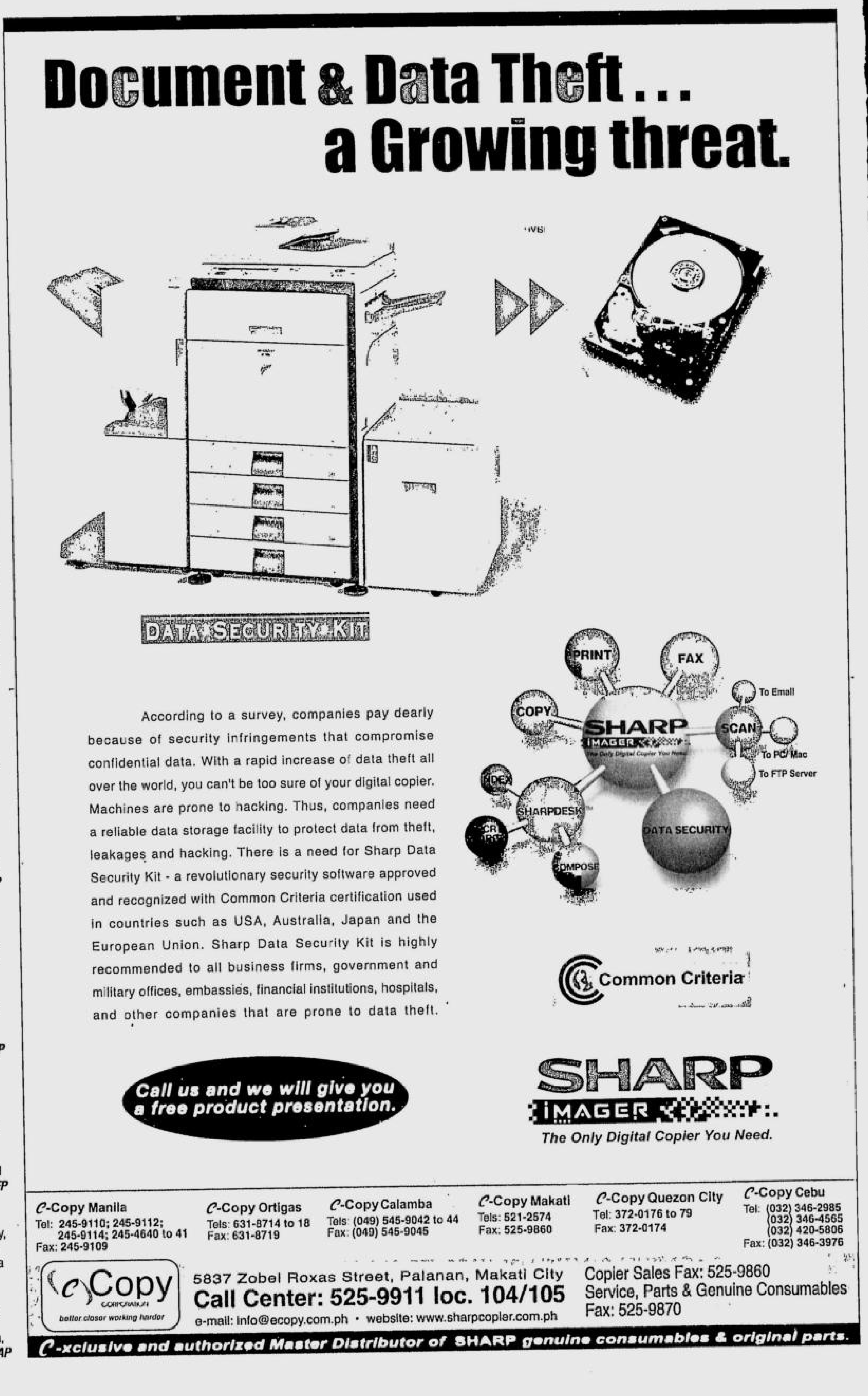
BAGHDAD—Drive-by shootings killed seven Iraqis and wounded eight on Tuesday as they headed to work. At 8 a.m., gunmen riding in an Opel sedan car shot and killed four ironsmiths riding a pickup truck to work in Mosul, said police Brig. Abdul-Hamid Khalaf. At about 6:30 a.m., a drive-by shooting at a minibus killed three Iraqi day laborers going to work at a farm near Baqouba. Also on Tuesday, a car bomb exploded in New Baghdad, killing five Iraqis—two police commandos and three civilians. Nazar Qadir, 39, a high school teacher on his way to work near Kirkuk was killed in a drive-by shooting. In Baghdad, gunmen in a speeding car killed one vendor selling cigarettes. *AP*

### Bird flu kills two in Iran

TEHRAN—Two people have died in Iran showing possible symptoms of the bird flu virus, a health official in the northwestern province of Kermanshah said Monday, quoted by the news agency ISNA. "Four people have been hospitalized, among them a woman and her husband who have died. There are suspicions of bird flu symptoms," said the head of the university hospital in the city. "Their tests have been sent to medical centers inside the country and abroad to clarify the issue," said the official, named only as Dr Izadi. *AFP*

### Strong earthquake hits Indonesia

JAKARTA—A strong earthquake struck in eastern Indonesian waters early Tuesday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, meteorological officials said. The epicenter of the 6.0-magnitude quake was 10 km beneath the Banda Sea, and about 180 km southwest of Ambon, the capital of Maluku province, the US Geological Survey said. Indonesian officials put the magnitude of the quake, which hit at 5:53 a.m. (2053 GMT Monday) at 5.5. The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear. "Residents in Ambon said they did not feel anything," said Arief Akhir, an official at the Meteorological and Geophysics Agency in Jakarta, adding that no damage or casualties were reported. *AP*



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# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

# Thaksin stages comeback, takes control of Thai gov't

BANGKOK—THAI PRIME MINISTER THAKSIN SHInawatra staged a political comeback Tuesday, leading his first cabinet meeting since stepping aside seven weeks ago following street protests and controversial polls.

"I have fully returned to work," Thaksin said as he entered government house, adding that he would lead all cabinet meetings from now on.

Thaksin's return came amid uncertainty over when new elections could be held after the courts declared last month's snap polls invalid, and despite the threat of renewed protests against him.

The billionaire businessman returned to lead a caretaker government, with Thailand expecting court-supervised elections later this year, possibly in October.

Prommin Lertsuridej, the prime minister's secretary, insisted that Thaksin had the legitimacy to take back the reins of government after the courts nullified the April 2 election.

"The majority of people are still confident in Thai Rak Thai and want Prime Minister Thaksin to carry out his duties. This is our political legitimacy," he told reporters.

Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party won last month's elections with 56 percent of the vote, but the victory was undermined by an opposition boycott that succeeded in convincing millions of voters to cast protest votes.

He stepped aside two days later, but never formally resigned. The elections left Thailand without a functioning parliament, and earlier this month the courts stepped in to clear up the chaos—invalidating the elections and ordering new polls.

But new polls look months away, with election authorities mired in controversy, which Thaksin's aides said forced the premier to return to office to prevent a political vacuum from hurting the economy.

"Frankly speaking, Thaksin has returned to work and there's nothing abnormal about it," Prommin said.

Thaksin's rivals disagreed, and raised the specter of new street protests like the ones that rattled Bangkok for months before he stepped aside.

The People's Alliance for Democracy, which spearheaded the protests, said Thaksin could not credibly run the country.

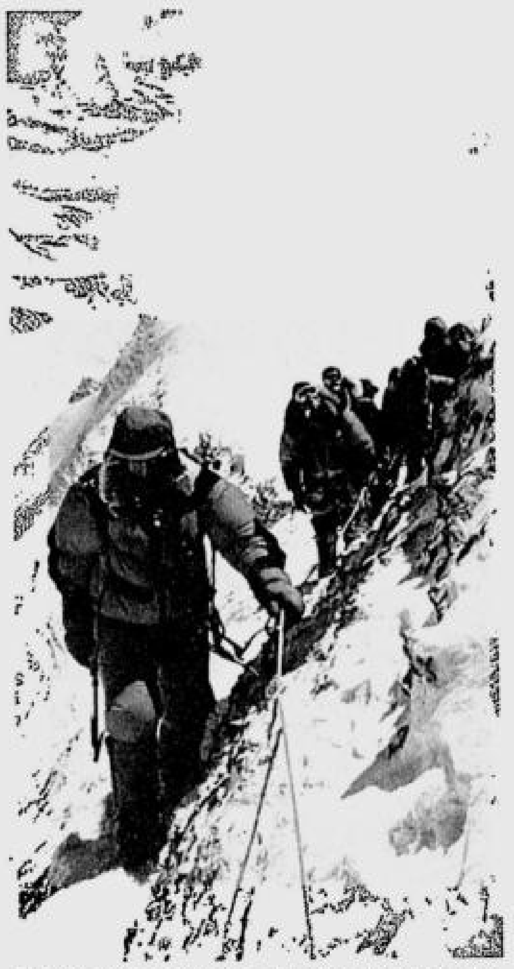
"He no longer has the legitimacy to work as the country's leader. He not only has ethical problems, but now also lacks any credibility," PAD spokesperson Suriyasai Katasila told AFP.

"We will resume our campaign against him next month, after the celebrations for the king's 60th anniversary on the throne," he said.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest-reigning monarch, will celebrate his anniversary with royalty from 30 countries on June 12-13.

The leading opposition party also accused Thaksin of backtracking on his promise to step aside.

"He has no right to go back to work. He has not answered any of the charges against him" over corruption and conflicts of interest, Democrat Party spokesperson Ong-art Klampaiboon told AFP. *AFP*



**JAPANESE** mountaineer Takako Arayama, 70, leads other climbers on the way to the top of Mount Everest May 17. Arayama is the oldest person to scale the world's highest peak from the Tibetan side. REUTERS

# Japanese is oldest man to scale Everest

KATHMANDU—A 70-YEAR-OLD JAPANESE climber believed to be the oldest man to scale Everest marked the achievement by leaving a photograph of his dog on the summit, he told reporters Tuesday.

Takao Arayama, aged 70 years and 225 days when he topped the world's highest mountain last Wednesday, beat the record held by a fellow countryman by just three days.

Arayama, who confessed to suffering headaches and breathing difficulties during the oxygen-aided ascent, said it was a wonderful feeling when he finally reached the top of the 8,848-meter mountain.

**ARAYAMA** REUTERS

"I am very happy to be the oldest man to scale the world's highest peak," the fit-looking and ruddy-cheeked Arayama said on his return to Nepal's capital Kathmandu.

The previous record holder was Yuichiro Miura, a professional skier, who made it to the summit of Everest in May 2003 aged 70 years and 222 days, according to Guinness World Records.

"I stayed for 30 minutes on the top of the mountain and took some pictures and left a picture of my dog, Pacu," said the married father of two.

"It was a wonderful feeling. Everything was below me, all the mountains and the world, when I reached the top," he said.

Arayama, a corporate management consultant from Kamakura, south of Tokyo, was part of an 11-person team that included six Nepalese Sherpas and five Japanese climbers.

He first climbed an 800-meter mountain near Tokyo at the age of 12 that inspired him to continue his obsession. *AFP*

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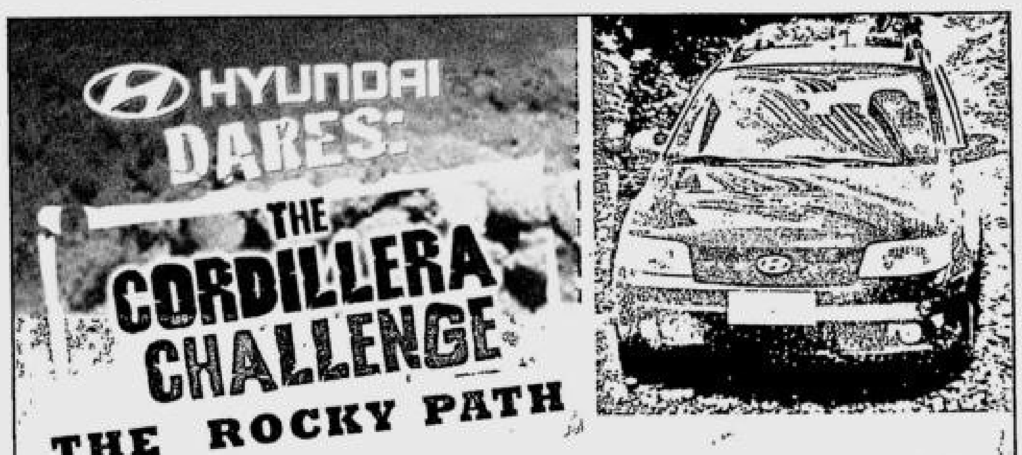

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**DAY TWO'S CHALLENGE: The rugged roads of Banawe and Sagada**
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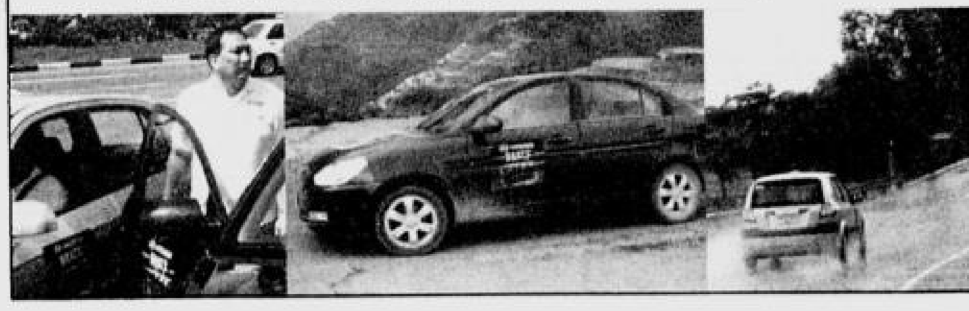

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SPORTS

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# Painters advance; Tortillos stopped

**By Jasmine W. Payo**

**GAME THURSDAY**
(*Olivarez Sports Center*)
3 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Granny Goose

TAKING FULL CONTROL AT THE DEFENSIVE END, RAIN or Shine shut down Magnolia Ice Cream in the last three minutes to post a 65-60 victory and secure a semifinal berth in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

"Our defense worked, we knew their shooters will be hitting from the outside," said Painters coach Leo Austria. "Everyone stepped up including Gilbert Malabanan and Jay-R Reyes, who showed again that he can finish games."

After Jojo Tangkay shot 13 of his 15 points in the second period, the trio of Malabanan, Reyes and Ronjay Enrile took over the Painters' offensive charge in the second half.

The Painters will clash against the top ranked Toyota Otis in a best-of-five semifinal series starting Saturday.

In the second game, Harbour Centre extended its own quarterfinal series against Granny Goose with a 59-51 win.

Joseph Yeo drilled in all of his 16 points in the second half to lead the Portmasters to a knockout quarterfinal match versus the Tortillos on Thursday. The winner will battle the second-seeded Montaña Jewels.

"We played a poor first half, we only had one assist, but we were only down by two," said Portmasters coach Jorge Gallent. "During the halftime break I told them to share the ball more."

Booking their sixth straight semifinal appearance didn't come easy for the Painters. Heading into the final six minutes with an eight point lead, 57-49, Arwind Santos spearheaded the Spinners' comeback to tie the contest at 58.

After Enrile put the Painters on top with a triple, 61-58, Santos' free throws again made it a one-point game, 61-60, with 3:11 minutes remaining.

But that turned out to be the final basket for the Spinners. The Painters trailed by as many as 10 points early in the second period, 15-25, before Tangkay almost singlehandedly cut the deficit to three points, 32-35, at the half.

Austria noted that the Painters finally evened it up after losing to the Spinners in the finals series last conference.

"It was a good revenge for us," said Austria.

**The scores:**

**First Game**

**RAIN OR SHINE 65**—Tangkay 15, Malabanan 13, Enrile 11, Ortiguerra 7, Reyes 6, Yambao 5, Tan 4, Cabatu 2, Eman 2, Sta. Maria 0.

**MAGNOLIA 60**—Santos 15, Williams 15, Valenzuela 9, Rizada 8, Misolas 4, Chan 3, Almeda 2, Isip 2, Co 2, Te 0, Jones 0.

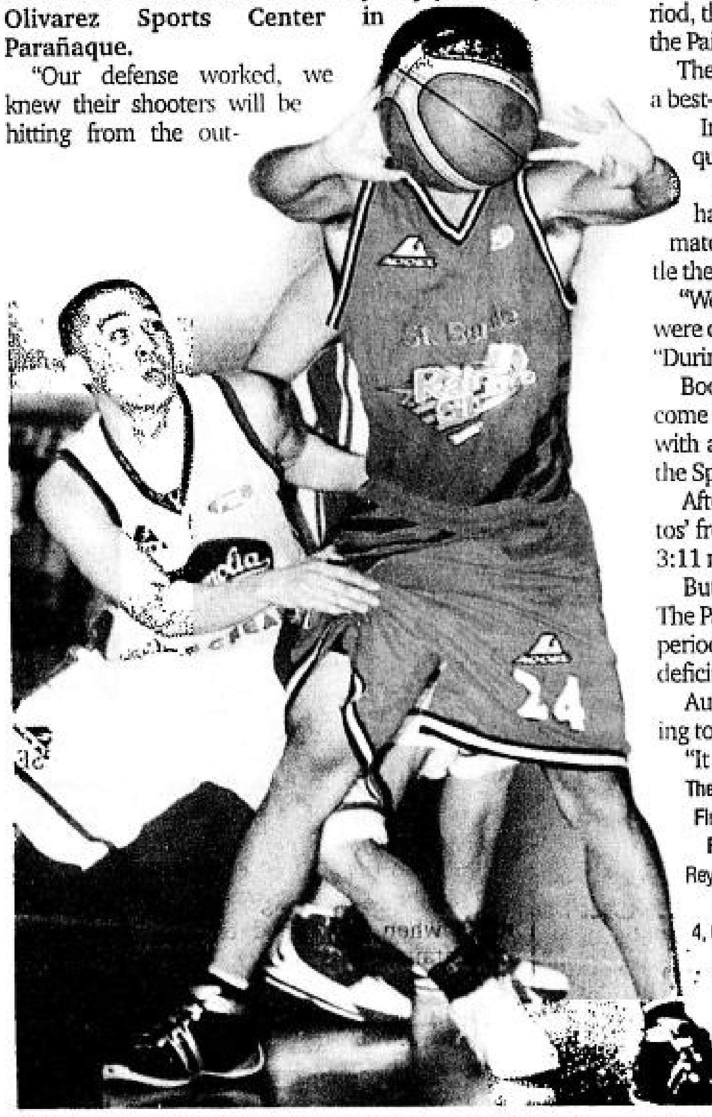
Quarters: 15-18, 32-35, 52-47, 65-60

**Second Game**

**HARBOUR CENTRE 59**—Yeo 16, Chia 9, Tenorio 9, Gamboa 8, Maierhoffer 6, Reyes 3, Araña 3, Alonzo 2, Lanete 2, Coching 1, Gaco 0.

**GRANNY GOOSE 51**—Quiñahan 14, Cruz 9, Santos 8, Latonio 6, Alfad 5, Ibañes 4, Ferrer 3, Concha 1, Grijaldo 1, David 0, Gavino 0, Saldua 0, Dela Peña 0.

Quarters: 22-17, 22-24, 43-35, 59-51



**RONJAY** Enrile (right) of Rain or Shine tosses a pass out of a Magnolia defensive trap led by Kim Valenzuela. ERIK ARAZAS

# Alaska eyes quarters today

**GAMES TODAY** (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Air21 vs San Miguel
7:35 p.m.—Alaska vs Ginebra

ALASKA SHOOTS FOR OUTRIGHT entry into the PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinals when the Aces clash with slipping Barangay Ginebra even as San Miguel guns for top semifinal seeding at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Aces are going into their 7:35 p.m. collision with the Gin Kings on a two-game winning streak.

A win by Alaska would give it No. 4 spot and a place in the first phase of the playoffs.

The Beermen, on the other hand, can gain the top spot in the Final Four with a win over Air21 in the first game at 4:40 p.m.

San Miguel has an 11-4 slate and will wind up tied with Purefoods in case of a win. But a superior quotient will give the Beermen top ranking.

The Express have also won their last two games, ironically, after shipping out gunslinger Ren-Ren Ritualo to Talk 'N Text for Leo Avenido. *Musong Castillo*

# RP battles Luxembourg to 2-2 draw, faces US next

## Dimakiling lone victor; Filipinas clobber Irish bets

**By Roy Luarca**

TURIN, ITALY—THE PHILIPPINE MEN'S team got stalled while the women's squad rebounded in the second round of the 37th Chess Olympiad here Monday.

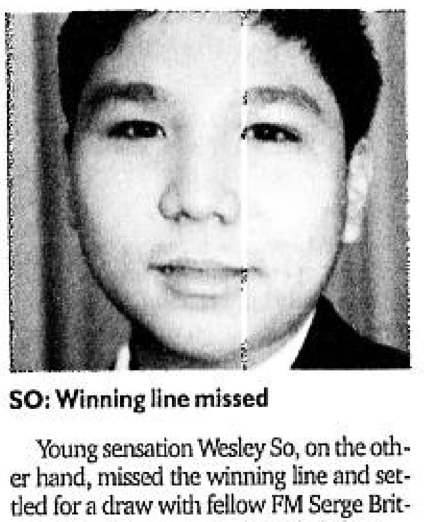
Only Fide Master Oliver Dinakiling was able to extract the full point as the Filipinos settled for a 2-2 tie against Luxembourg at the Olympic Village venue.

The Filipinas, on the other hand, squeezed out a 3-0 rout over Ireland to recover from the 2.5-0.5 beating dealt them by the Germans in round 1.

Men's team captain Sammy Estimo told his wards to forget about the bungled opportunity against Luxembourg which is ranked 63rd, lower than the Philippines' 35th seeding.

Estimo told them to focus on their round 3 battle against the seventh-seeded Americans on Tuesday.

The Philippines should have beaten Luxembourg, but two-time national champion Darwin Laylo dropped a "won" game against International Master Mieczyslaw Bakalarz in 70 moves of a Gruenfeld with some weak moves.



**SO: Winning line missed**

Young sensation Wesley So, on the other hand, missed the winning line and settled for a draw with fellow FM Serge Brittner after 30 moves of a French defense.

Handling black, Grandmaster Mark Paragua agreed to a draw with GM Alberto David after 37 moves of a Sicilian-Nadjorf variation.

The 25-year-old Dimakiling worked his way from one pawn down to prevail over IM Fred Berend in 57 moves of a Ruy Lopez and boost the Philippines' total to 6.0 points, the same as that of the United States.

Paragua, the country's highest-ranked player with an Elo of 2617, will be handling white against Gata Kamsky, who boasts an Elo of 2671, on board 1.

GM Eugene Torre (Elo 2543) will be seeing action for the first time in his 19th straight Olympiad when he takes on GM Alexander Onischuk (2650) on board 2.

Antonio will be pitted against GM Hikaru Nakamura (2664) while Dimakiling (2452), who has won his first two games, will go up against GM Varuzhan Akobian (2575) on board 4.

Though the Filipinos have never beaten the Americans in six Olympiad meetings, the scores have always been close.

The Americans triumphed in 1980 (Valetta), 1984 (Thessaloniki), 1988 (Thessaloniki), 2000 (Istanbul) and 2002 (Bled), all by 2.5-1.5 scores. The Filipinos managed a 2-2 draw in the 1974 Nice Olympiad.

In the distaff side, Woman International Master-elect Sheerie Joy Lomibao beat Suzanne Connoly in 19 moves of a Pirc, followed by Sherily Cua in 30 moves of a Nizovitch and capped by WIM Beverly Mendoza's 61-move Dutch defense victory over Poornima Menon.

With 3.5 points, the Filipinas will take on No. 32 Switzerland in round 3.

Defending champion China and France, both with 6.0 points, collide in the women's division. Co-leaders Lithuania and Latvia also part ways. Russia and Poland, both with 5.5 points, will meet on the third board.

Leader and top seed Russia tackles Germany (7.5) in the featured match of the men's division. Poland and Greece, both with 7.5 points, also part ways.

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### WORLD CUP

# England hopes to lay ghosts of shoot-outs past to rest

LONDON—ENGLAND'S WORLD CUP HOPEfuls are determined to end a tale of woe in penalty shoot-outs that has dogged their country's hopes of trophy success.

England will leave for Germany having known far more agony than ecstasy in a discipline which has come to play a key part in the latter stages of tournament soccer.

Shoot-out misses have condemned England to exits at World Cups in 1990 and 1998, along with Euro 96 on home soil and by hosts Portugal in Euro 2004.

"To go out on penalties is the biggest kick in the teeth you can have in football at this level," said England midfielder Frank Lampard after trudging off the pitch in Lisbon in 2004.

"We're all devastated."

Keeper David James took his share of the blame for England's exit in the nerve-jangling finale, saying: "I'm gutted that I had seven penalties and I didn't save one."

England will probably have to face its demons to succeed at the finals where games will be very tight after a group stage against Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Sweden.

"If we're not prepared for them this time, then I don't think we ever will be," experienced defender Gary Neville told reporters at a training camp in Portugal.

"We've had so many bad experiences with penalties.

"We know what's going to happen, we know what can happen. We know it's probably going to come to penalties in one of the four knockout games if we're going to go far in this tournament. And we've got to deal with it."

Neville believes it is harder to beat the current generation of keepers, many of whom will have done their homework on the players they are likely to face.

"I think goalkeepers are more agile and it's getting more difficult to score penalties."

With James relegated to the subs bench in Germany, the weight of responsibility for England will fall squarely on the shoulders of Paul Robinson.

Robinson feels ready and able to cope with a World Cup shoot-out—but is keeping the secret of his preparation very much to himself.

"I have been doing a lot of research and I'll be going into penalty shoot-outs—if and when we come across them—very well prepared," he told reporters. *Reuters*

**LAMPARD** AFP

**THE KING** leaves his court to the cheers of his minions. League MVP Steve Nash high-fives fans after leading the Phoenix Suns past the LA Clippers and into the next round. AP

# Mavs, Suns advance

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—The Dallas Mavericks found a solution for Tim Duncan and San Antonio, surging to a 119-115 win in overtime to halt the Spurs bid for a second straight NBA title.**

Dirk Nowitzki, who had 37 points and 15 rebounds, forced overtime with a season-saving three-point play for the Mavs who reached the conference finals for the third time in franchise history.

"We believed it was our time to win this," Nowitzki said.

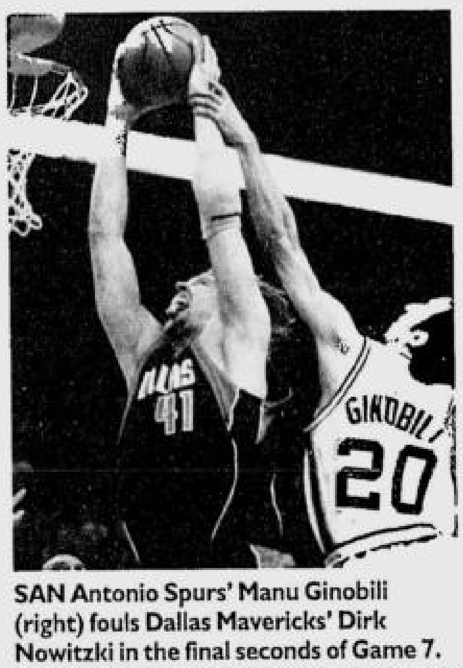
Dallas, which have never been to the NBA Finals, will face Phoenix in a best-of-seven semifinal series after the Suns eliminated the Clippers, 127-107, in one of two Game 7's on Monday. Dallas hosts Game One on Wednesday.

Dallas narrowly avoided the specter of a catastrophic collapse. After squandering a 3-1 series lead, the Mavericks blew a 20-point second-quarter lead and were one miss away from yet another setback to their Texas-sized nemesis.

Instead, the Mavericks showed the heart that has made the Spurs champions.

They denied San Antonio the chance to become the ninth team—and second during this postseason—to overcome a 3-1 deficit.

Wilting under the demands of defending Duncan—who had a playoff career-high 41 points, 15 rebounds and six assists—the Mavericks faced their first deficit at a terrible time.



**SAN Antonio Spurs' Manu Ginobili (right) fouls Dallas Mavericks' Dirk Nowitzki in the final seconds of Game 7. Nowitzki completed the three-point play to send the game into overtime.** AP

Duncan passed out of a double-team to Manu Ginobili, whose three-pointer gave the Spurs a 104-101 lead with 32 seconds remaining in regulation and brought a roar from the crowd at the ATT Center, who sensed the completion of a historic comeback.

Nowitzki had other ideas. Instead of settling for one of his patented jumpers, he overpowered a smaller defender on his way to the basket and dropped in a layup while drawing a hard foul from Ginobili. His free throw tied it with 21 seconds to go.

"We had a similar situation in game six," Nowitzki said. "We didn't have a lot of time left, I forced a three and the game was over. This time, I had a clear shot to the basket and a lot of time left.

Directed by MVP Steve Nash in Phoenix, the Suns sank a team playoff-record 15 three-pointers and won their second game seven of the playoffs.

Nash had 29 points and 11 assists for the second-seeded Suns, who have been pushed to the limit in each of their first two series but have emerged with convincing closing wins on their home floor.

"When the games mean the most that is when it is the most fun," Nash said. *AFP*

- **NBA on TV:**

SOLAR SPORTS—Miami vs Detroit, 8 a.m.
RPN-9—Miami vs Detroit, 7 p.m.

# Athletics great retires

CASABLANCA, MOROCCO—Four-time 1,500-meter world champion and world record holder Hicham El Guerrouj announced his retirement on Monday, saying that after 16 years of competitive running it was time for a "new life."

A misty-eyed El Guerrouj, 31, who won the 1,500- and 5,000-meter gold medals at the 2004 Olympics, made the announcement at a brief news conference in Casablanca.

"For 16 years, I've done sports. Now I want to start a new life," he told reporters packed into a swanky hotel room.

He thanked friends, family and those involved in his career.

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. A thousand thanks," he said in his native Arabic. "I want to say to the Moroccan people that everything is possible."

Besides his four world titles, El Guerrouj holds the world record in the 1,500 meters and the mile, both indoors and outdoors, and ran the fastest ever 2,000.

In Athens, he became the first runner to win both the 1,500 and 5,000 at the Olympics since Finland's Paavo Nurmi in 1924. He has not competed since winning the 5,000 at Athens on Aug. 28, 2004.

El Guerrouj mounted a podium to the strains of melancholy music played over a sound system as video of his races were shown, including his Athens victories.

The athlete did not disclose his future plans. *AP*

# Magic's Howard joins Adidas hoop camp

BEIJING—THE THIRD ANNUAL ADIDAS superstar basketball camp kicks off today with 62 of the best young players from eight countries coming together to learn hoop skills from NBA stars Dwight Howard and TJ Ford.

The Philippines will be represented by Ateneo's Kevin Gamboa and La Salle-Green Hills' Patrick Fran. They will join players from China, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Australia.

The 62 players will be screened and the top 10 will be sent to participate in the Adidas superstar camp in the United States.

Aside from hoop skills, the players will also learn more about keeping fit from Wayne Hall, the personal trainer of Houston Rockets superstar Tracy McGrady.

There will also be a coaching course to be handled by coaching legend KC Jones.

Howard, the 2004 top pick in the NBA by the Orlando Magic, and Ford, the speedy Milwaukee Bucks point guard, will share the secrets of their game with the participants.

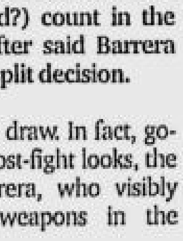
Howard has a special affinity to the superstar camp, having graduated from its ranks before achieving his NBA dream.

Aside from Howard, Ford and Jones, also expected to attend the camp which will be held in the home of the 2008 Olympics is Detlef Schrempf, who is the driving force behind these touring clinics.

Schrempf was one of the brains behind the first Adidas performance basketball camp, which was held in his native Berlin in the mid 1990s.

# Barrera is super fit—for retirement

### BARE EYE



*Recah Trinidad*

THEY CLAIMED MARCO ANTONIO BARrera, first Mexican to have made Manny Pacquiao super famous, would be defending his world title.

Barrera was absent for that official chore on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila) in California.

The fellow who fought the shorter Rocky Juarez was a flabby cop who had stolen the world super featherweight boxing title.

Worse, this dumb fellow was allowed to flash that bogus crown like an official breast badge to con the boxing world.

With his condition, the poseur should have been brought into the ring in a wheelchair.

He looked every soft, slow inch super fit for retirement.

* * *

**Of course, that over-the-hill fighter they had identified as Barrera lost to Juarez.**

**No, correction please: The first tally of the scores bared the fight had ended in a draw.**

**That result officially announced by Mike Buffer to the whole world was readily received with jeers.**

**Juarez, shorter but definitely firmer, sharper, faster won it clear in the eyes of ringside fans and television viewers.**

**That foul result, predictably rejected by majority of fans, would have already retained for Barrera the WBC 130-lb. title.**

**There was disbelief and derision when the corrected (doctored?) count in the papers the morning after said Barrera had actually won via a split decision.**

* * *

It was anything but a draw. In fact, going by their respective post-fight looks, the bloodied, battered Barrera, who visibly forgot his defensive weapons in the dugout, would appear like a victim of a sordid mismatch.

In truth, it was Juarez, silver medal winner for the US in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, who became a victim of a mismatch-in the hands of two judges.

Barrera, both pathetic and pitiful, should have been taken out on a stretcher, sent straight to the hospital.

Instead, the blasted bogus champ was allowed to slur Manny Pacquiao in a talk with the eminent Larry Merchant.

* * *

**Barrera said Juarez, with deeper style and more movements, is a whole lot better than Pacquiao.**

**Barrera, stopped by Pacquiao in the 11th in 2003, proceeded to call Pacquiao limited, one-dimensional.**

**Sorry, señor, but nobody who knows his boxing would ever buy that cheap claim.**

**Juarez is not a bad boxer. But one dumb, shallow fighter will always make an ordinary but fit boxer appear sharp and great.**

**With his condition, the masquerading Barrera would have been stopped cold by Pacquiao even if the RP prizefight marvel used only his left hand.**

**The weary, wasted Mexican must return the stolen crown.**

**His dumb act against the obscure Rocky Juarez was a slur on the nobility of true, worthy world champions.**

* * *

(**ASSISTANCE:** A timely tip from Manolito "Boy" Gonzales of Mandaluyong: Tune in to the radio program "Kaya Mo Ba 'To?", dzRM 1278 khz every Sunday 2-3 p.m., it's rich in vital information for everybody. In one segment alone, families of OFWs seeking to avail of direct housing loans from the SSS, are given valuable advice. Gonzales, who works under philanthropist Ruperto Tan of Eterton Multi-Resources Corp., a program sponsor, said interested OFWs may text Rene Punzalan for assistance (0919-7349704). Gonzales could be contacted at tel. 532-7021. There's a segment on English proficiency, before the program winds up with a 10-minute relaxation session of stress-relieving, energy-recharging exercises. Wow!)

# Pumaren not panicking

### IN HUDDLE

*Beth Celis*

AFTER SIX straight losses in the ongoing PBA conference, Talk 'N Text coach Derick Pumaren should be pressing the panic button.

Although he disagrees that the Phone Pals are now the strongest team on paper, people believe they are and are therefore wondering why they continue to skid downhill.

This expectation, said Derick, must be causing some amount of pressure on the players.

"That was a big trade we just went through. We have four new players (Don Allado, RenRen Ritualo, Anthony Washington and Patrick Fran) and less than 10 days of practice. The team hasn't gelled and the players are pressured to deliver because of the "must win" situation we're in. We're playing tight. The element of fun and enjoyment of the game is gone," Derick explained.

* * *

**As far as attitude is concerned, Derick said he has no problems. Everyone is cooperating.**

***"Kaya lang, yun na nga, nanganga-pa pa.*** **The players are still feeling each other out. And remember the new players we acquired were playing, major minutes in the team where they came from, as opposed to those players we traded."**

**No, he's not about to press the panic button." It's not panic that I feel, I'm feeling bad because I've not come through for management, which has, given me all the support."**

**"I know it's going to be tough. We still have to pass the wild card phase. When this team was formed, I was really so excited. I could see their potential, I could see what they can do. It's all just a matter of time," Derick said.**

* * *

While he does not demand the presence of a standby ambulance stationed at the venue of the Junior PBA league, the prominent father of one of the junior cagers said the PBA should at least assign a standby doctor at the games who can administer first aid in case of an accident.

The father knows whereof he speaks.

During the opening games of the Junior PBA league recently, his young son suffered an accident where his head smashed hard on the floor.

When he got up, the boy felt so dizzy, he could hardly walk straight. His parents were looking for a doctor in the house but there was none.

Fortunately, the PBA squad the boy was playing for was conscientious enough to send its team doctor to look after the needs of its junior cagers.

He immediately came to the rescue of the injured boy, who was unable to return to the bench and had to watch the rest of the game from the sidelines.

The father had planned to write a strong letter to the PBA Commissioner's office, calling their attention on this matter, but I'm not sure if he followed through with his intention.

* * *

**HOOPVINE:** Three former PBA commissioners had a reunion of sorts when the league's first commissioner Leo Prieto celebrated his 82nd birthday with successors Rudy Salud and Jun Bernardino as guests. A reunion among these three is always a happy occasion especially if the topic of conversation is an interesting one . . . I was recently asked in a radio program what I thought about Eugene Tejada's spinal injury. Was it the result of his fall or the fall of heavyweight Red Bull cager Mick Pennisi, who was thrown off balance and landed on him? It's really hard to tell, all I know is that it was an accident . . . Eyewitness accounts say Eugene fell on his buttocks the same manner Hollywood actor Christopher Reeve fell from his horse (some say though, that Reeve landed on the top of his head). . . Mick, a certified nice guy, was one of the very first people to visit Eugene at the Makati Medical Center where he was confined.

# Asuncions out to boost stock

## Tough field plunges into action

By Jasmine W. Payo

GIVEN ENOUGH INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE, TOP LOCAL SHUTTLER KENnevic Asuncion said the Philippines could do better in the world rankings.

"Our goal is to go up (the rankings) again," said Asuncion, who dropped to No. 69 with sister Kennie in the world mixed doubles rankings after going as high as No. 22 last September.

But the Asuncions are expecting to boost their stock again in the Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open Badminton Championships, which starts today at the PhilSports Arena.

"This new tournament is an advantage for us," Asuncion said in a press conference yesterday at Crowne Plaza in Ortigas.

"We've been hoping for better exposure abroad, but we lack funding. Players in other countries compete in at least 10 tournaments a year. We compete in only four or five, so this is a big addition for us."

Retired police general Edgar Aglipay, vice president of the Philippine Badminton Association, agreed the tournament will also benefit the country's young players.

"Before, only a few compete outside the country," he said. "Other players will see how they are compared with other players of the world."

Leading the 200 participants from 17 countries are Germany-based Xu Huaiwen, seeded fourth in the world women's singles, and Hafiz Hashim of Malaysia, ranked No. 11 in the world men's singles.

Kennevic said the five-day event will see a mix of veteran and promising players.

"We have up-and-coming players, so we hope to have a better finish," he said.

The Philippine team will also be beefed-up by Lloyd Escoses and Mark Alvin Natividad in the men's singles and Irene Chiu and Karyn Velez in the women's singles.

"Events such as the Philippine Open will help inspire young players to achieve new levels," added James White, vice president for business development of the organizing International Management Group.

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**BADMINTON** association VP Edgardo Aglipay welcomes players and officials as Bingo Bonanza CEO Albee Benitez and IMG VP James White look on. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

# Olivarez, Tan Ho gain 2nd round

TOP SEED PABLO OLIVAREZ II ROUTED Michael Tamayo, 6-3, 6-0, yesterday to lead the second-round winners in the boys' 16-under division of the 2006 Head Penn Junior Tennis Tour at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Olivarez will next meet Daniel Bautista, who scored a 6-3, 6-3, victory over Niko Katigbak.

Second seed Joshua Tan Ho breezed past Juan Fidel Regis, 6-0, 6-2; and fourth seed Russell Arcilla Jr. downed Mark Anthony Lizardo, 6-2, 6-1; to also advance to the next round.

Second-round winners in the boys' 14-under division were Kyle Cordero, Mark Cruz, Jovy Barce, Juan Maverick Ribaya, Princeton Gerapusco, Jacob Lagman, John Marie Altiche, Tim Polero, Juan Gabriel Pena, Uriel Comes, Leander Lazaro, Juan Paolo Cansino, Alberto Villamor, Paul Nicole Magaway and Jose Lorenzo Ferrer.

In the girls' 18-under play, Sandra Lagman defeated Rebecca Fabregas, 6-4, 6-4; and Celeste Rafael beat Erranelle Soriano, 6-1, 6-3; to join seeds Bien Zoleta, Jessica Agra, Macy Solon, Steffi Dizon and Ivy de Castro in the next round.

**OPEN** defending champion Adam Le Vesconte lines his putt on No. 4 as teammate Jose "Peping" Cojuangco looks on. RUDY ESPERAS

PRO-AM WIN

# Rosales underscores RP Open bid

FILIPINO ACE GERARD ROSALES PROVIDED an optimistic prelude to his Philippine Open bid as his foursome with amateurs Macariu Tiu, Romulo Santos and Matthew Manotoc ruled the Pro-Am yesterday at the fabled East course of Wack Wack in Mandaluyong City.

Rosales, who fell short in the 2005 edition where he finished second to Australian Adam Le Vesconte, powered his Wack Wack team to a 15-under-par 57, beating 22 other squads.

The tournament, co-presented by International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Pagcor, served as the appetizer to the 90th staging of the RP Open, Asia's oldest national golf tournament, which tees off Thursday.

Crowne Plaza, Globe Telecom, Konica Minolta, Motorola, Philcopy, Posi-Track, Srixon, Sunbolt, U-Bix Corp. and 3636Golf also back the event organized by the Asian Tour.

Two entries from the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP), bannered by American Jason Knutzon and Briton Chris Rodgers, settled for runner-up honors.

Knutzon, who posted his biggest victory in the 2004 Macau Open, steered his NGAP 1 squad that included Lovell Gopez, Raymund Sangil and Paolo Kagalingan to second place with a 59.

Rodgers' NGAP 2 team with Jun Ibay, Ray and Ricky Velasco actually scored a 59 but settled for third spot after a countback.

Earlier in the day, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Wack Wack chair Ben Abalos Sr. hit the ceremonial drives that formally opened the RP Open, 19th leg of the Asian Tour.

# Cebu Landmaster forge Visayas final with M. Lhuillier

MANDAUE CITY—CEBU LANDMASTER-TOLEDO turned to its veteran crew at crunch time to escape with a 66-63 win over the Mantawi Traders Sunday and advance to the Visayas Division Finals of the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) First Conference at the Mandaue City Cultural and Sports Complex. Toledo swept the best-of-three series, 2-0.

Maui Huelar hit a triple to shatter a 61-61 tie with 37 seconds left, 64-61, but Mantawi countered through Kim Calo's layup, 64-63. Carlos Sayon quickly drew a foul from Joseph Guangco, splitting his free throws for a 65-63 count.

Cebu Landmaster will now face the undefeated M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala in a best-of-three series for the Visayas Division crown.

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# Asian club volley unfolds

**DEFENDING CHAMPION CHINA BEGINS ITS TITLE-RETENTION drive while the Philippines seeks a morale-boosting win at the start today of the 2006 Hitachi Asian Women's volleyball club championship at the Rizal Coliseum.**

China, represented by Tiajin Bridgestone, meets a Thailand club in the second game of the triple bill at 4 p.m., while the Filipinas battle fellow newcomer Indonesia in the last game at 6 p.m.

The first game at 2 p.m. pitting Kazakhstan and Chinese-Taipei will follow the opening ceremony at 1.

Powerhouse Japan plays its first match tomorrow in the six-game round-robin tournament sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Hitachi and Bayview Hotel.

Led by Most Valuable Player Li Shan and best spiker Wang Li, the Chinese swept all their six assignments last year. Li and Wang are on China's roster for the match against the fifth-seeded Thailand.

"Every team here in Asia has improved a lot, so we're expecting a real tough series here," said Chinese head coach Wang Baoquan through an interpreter.

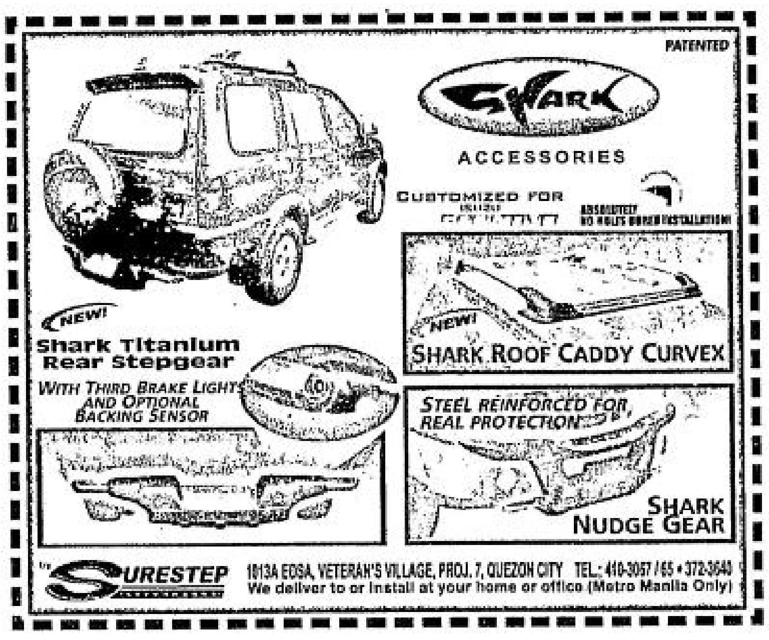
The Thai belles, Southeast Asia's finest squad, are expected to lean on veterans Patcharee Saengmuang and Amporn Yhapa, who won the best server award last year.

The Filipinas are also expected to have their hands full against the Indonesians in the tourney organized by Philippine Volleyball Federation.

"We expect the Indonesians to play hard," said RP head coach Dante Reyes, who will rely on V-league two-time MVP Mary Jean Balce and Cherry Rose Macatangay. "Our players are ready to take the challenge."

Michelle Laborte, Carolino sisters Michelle and Marietta, Shermaine Penano, Anna Fulo, Glenda Pintolo, Jinni Mondejar, Jean Espolong, Dahlia Cruz, Christ Latigay and Beverly Boto complete the RP roster.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza will be the guest speaker in the opening ceremony. Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez will do the ceremonial serve.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# Braves send Pistons crashing to 9th loss

AMAS, KIDAPAWAN—THE NORTH Cotabato Braves resumed their fiery run in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship Monday by whipping the Laguna-Sta. Rosa Pistons, 88-76, at the provincial capitol gym here.

Five-foot-nine Rex Ligue produced his biggest game so far to help the Braves tie second-running Iligan at 6-3 in the southern division of the tournament.

Ligue finished with a double-double of 16 points and 12 rebounds, two steals and a block for the Braves of Gov. Manny Piñol.

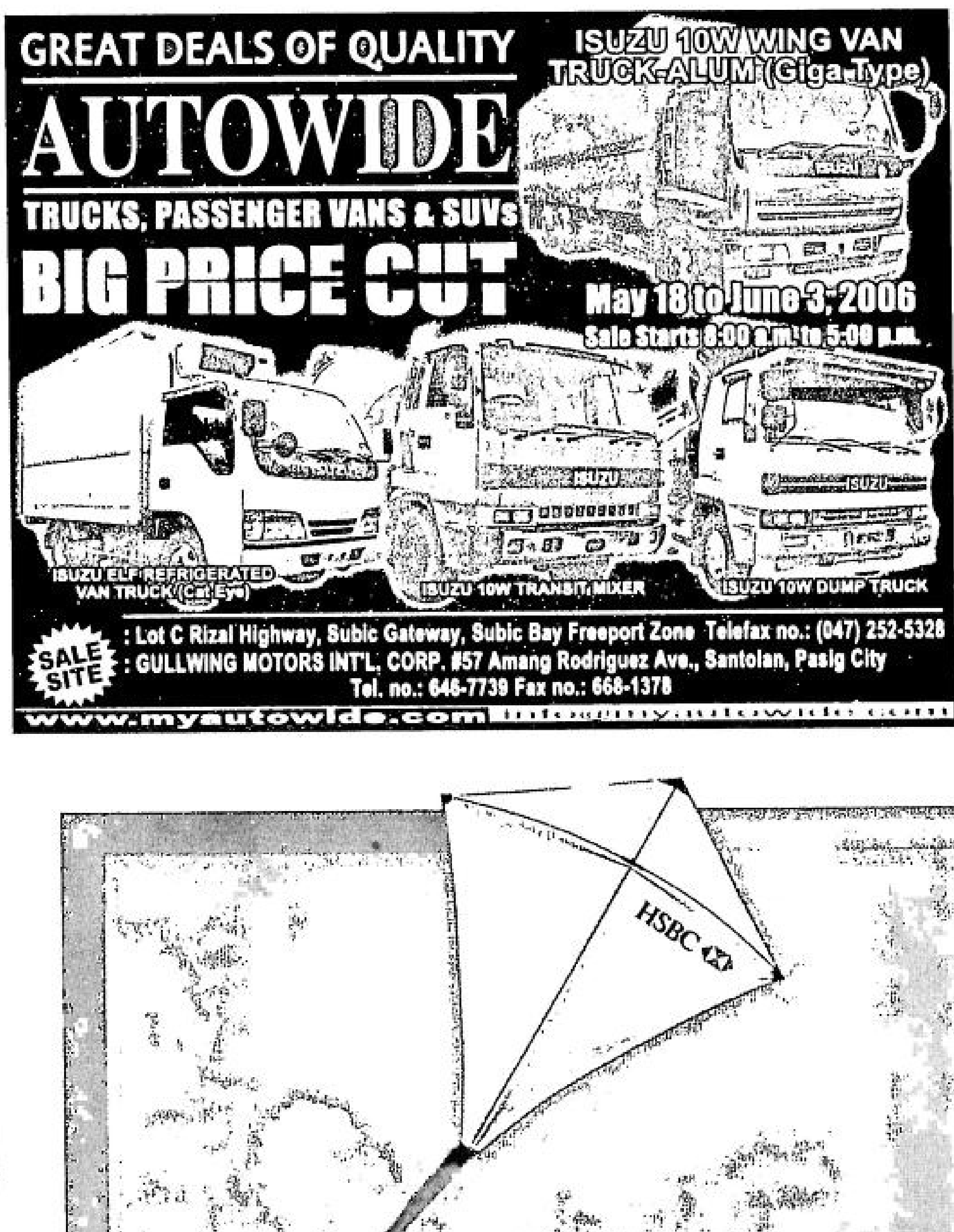
The Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Mayor Joey Katindig suffered their ninth consecutive defeat.

**The scores:**

**NORTH COTABATO 88**—Ligue 16, Jawod 15, Allado 13, Dagatan 10, Clar 7, Regalado 5, Sansaet 5, Reyes 5, Etrata 4, Binas 4, Tamayo 3, Del Norte 2, Cabanog 1, Martinez 0.

**LAGUNA-STA. ROSA 76**—Intano 16, Alminario 14, Natividad 13, Proceso 12, Nuqui 10, Baylon 4, Vivero 3, Nolasco 3, Aquino 1, Sy 1, Mamangon 0, Prior 0, Rada 0.

**Quarters:** 24-17, 38-35, 59-54, 88-76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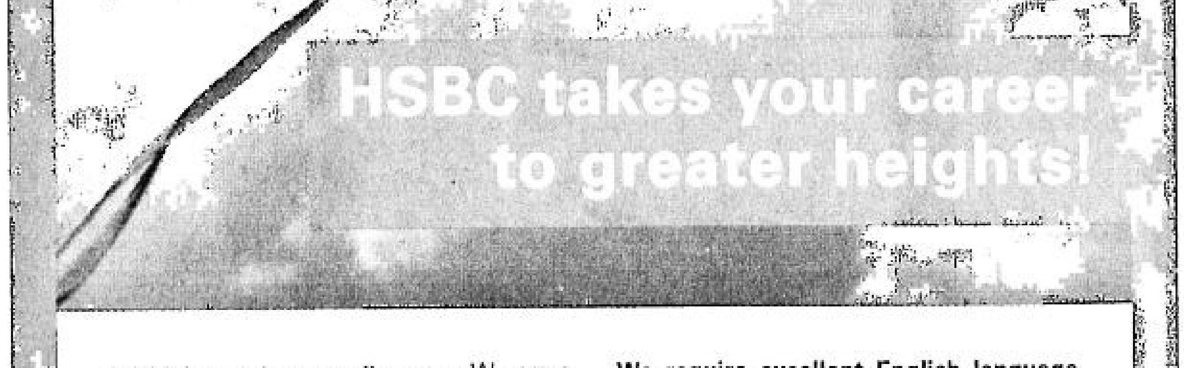
# Northwoods takes on all comers in Ford shoot-out

ROYAL NORTHWOODS GEARS UP FOR ITS much-awaited showdown with 15 other golf clubs in the Ford National Team Shoot-out grand finals, hoping to come up with a strong start when the event is played on May 25 at The Orchard and on May 26 at Sta. Elena.

More than the all-expense-paid golfing holiday to China staked in the 36-hole championship, the dominating Northwoods bets are raring to prove their worth as the best among the 32-member clubs of the Federation of Golf Clubs Phils. Inc.

Northwoods topped the Luzon North finals, the second stage of the three-phase series presented by Ford Motors, at Luisita Golf recently.

With Lyn Mangulabnan firing an 11-under card, Northwoods ran away with the top honors in the satellite. Backing up Mangulabnan were Boy Unson, Arnel Arteche and Ynes del Rosario.



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### Makati derby gets going

THE ALTUZ 3-COCK derby starts today with 60 fights billed in the event that kicks off at 5 p.m. at the Makati Coliseum. More than P200,000 will be staked in the event. Last Monday, the Ika Mae entry of Butchoy Olano topped the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby. The derby will be hosted by cocker Ram Lopez and will be supported by B-Meg Derby Ace. Meanwhile, the next event at Makati Coliseum unfolds on June 3.

### SJC cockfest sets 120 tiffs

PROMINENT COCKERS from the provinces troop to the San Juan Coliseum for a 5-cock derby today. A total of 120 fights are scheduled in the event. Members of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines are also joining the derby to be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Matches start at 2 p.m. Meanwhile, the Super Angels 3-cock derby gets going Monday, May 29 with 50 entries expected. For inquiries, call 725-5369.

### 210 breeders in bullstag tilt

A TOTAL OF 210 GAMEfowl breeders have joined this year's National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders National 8-bullstag derby, according to NFGB president Ricoy Palmares Jr. The cash pot is P3 million. The championship round will be held starting at 1 p.m. tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum with more than 100 fights on tap. Entries must be submitted today at the Araneta green gate. For inquiries, call 911-3101 or 911-2928.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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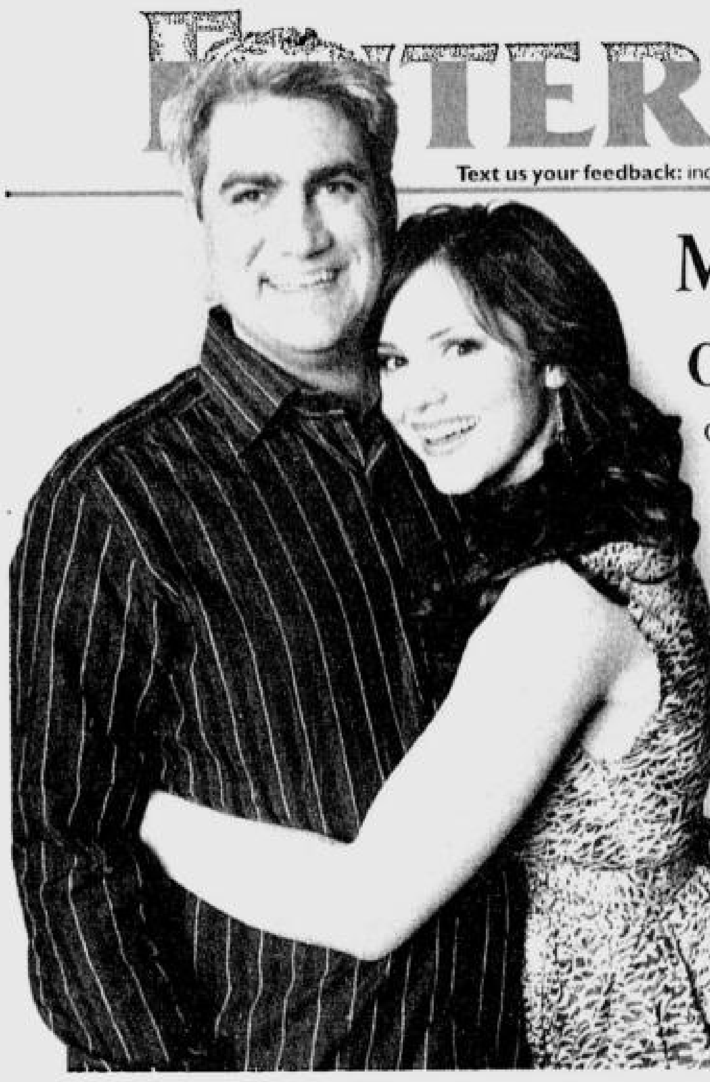


## Moment of truth

CHUMS IN THIS PHOTO, ADversaries onstage. Taylor Hicks and Katharine McPhee face off today with three songs each in "American Idol" 2006's final showdown at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood.

On Saturday, Star World arranged an exclusive interview with the man who made gray hair cool this year, and the dazzling LA lady.

Gotta have a gimmick, they agreed. He might sneak in a harmonica solo or two, Taylor said. Kat revealed she planned to wear a "hot" dress and great shoes.

*Story on page A2/6.*

### FEEDBACK

## Kudos & correction

From Nicole M. Castillo, marketing manager, Solar Entertainment Corp. for United International Pictures:

Congratulations to Victor Cabrera (general manager of Columbia Pictures) for the successful release of "The Da Vinci Code," but may we correct an error he made in the story "Da Vinci' Murder Mystery Makes a Killing on Opening Day" by Bayani San Diego Jr.

"Mission: Impossible III (M:i:III)" grossed P12.7 million on its first day, not P10.1 million, as [Cabrera] stated.

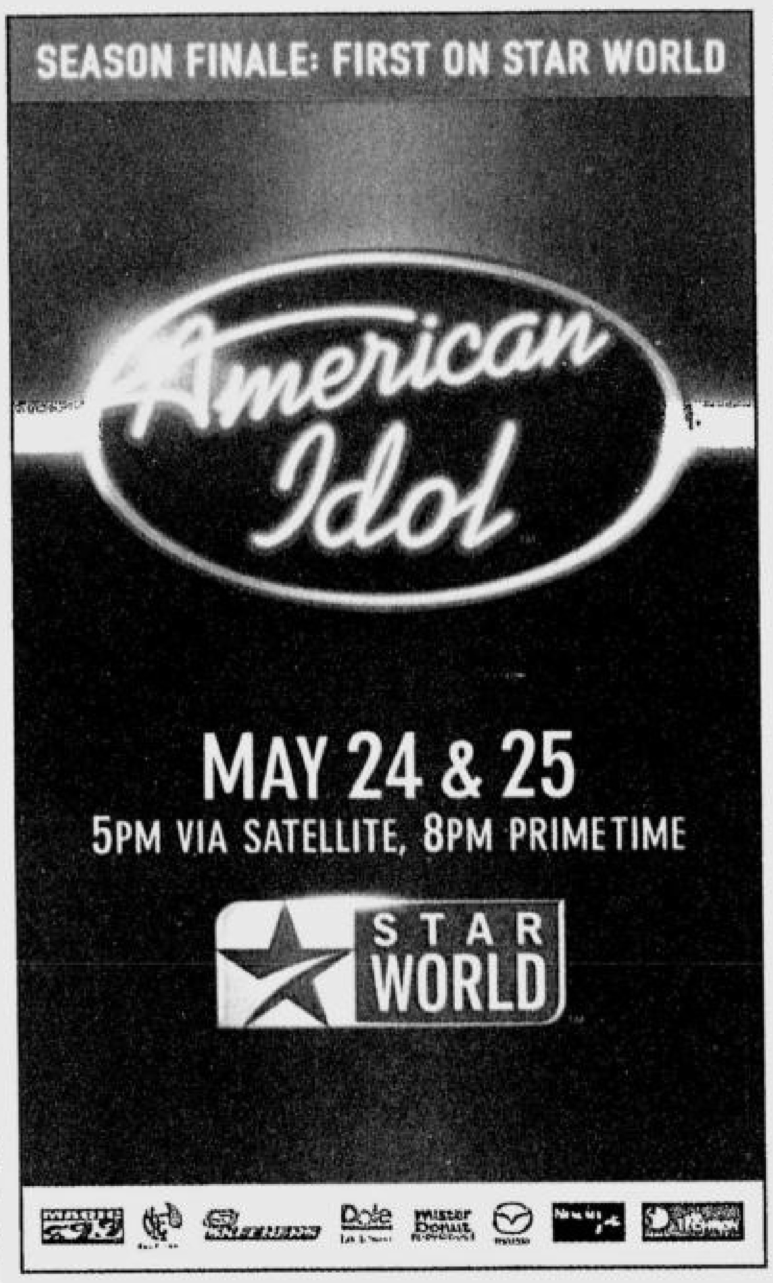
Meanwhile, I'd like to invite the movie-going public to watch two "non-controversial" films, brought to you by Solar-UIP: the G-rated Dreamworks animation "Over the Hedge" (from the makers of "Shrek" and "Madagascar") and the PG-13 rated action blockbuster "M:i:III."

Both films are still going strong nationwide.

From INQUIRER Entertainment:

Castillo confirmed that the figure Cabrera mentioned, P10.1 million, was the opening-day earnings of "M:i:III" in Metro Manila only. Castillo said Cabrera should have included the nationwide earnings of "M:i:III," P12.7, since he was comparing it to the

FEEDBACK/ A2-2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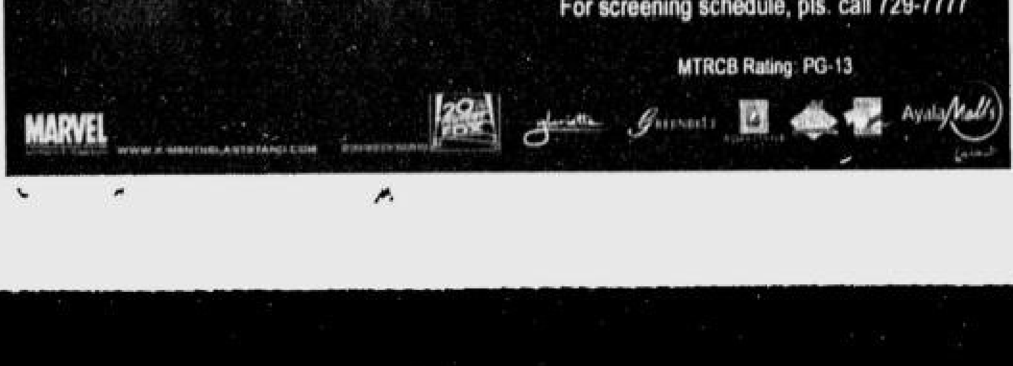
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5 THE DA VINCI CODE
6 OVER THE HEDGE
7 THE DA VINCI CODE
8 X-MEN 3
9 POSEIDON
10 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

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2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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8 X-MEN 3

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XMEN III
M:i:III

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WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

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REINCARNATION
PAMAHIIN

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PAMAHIIN
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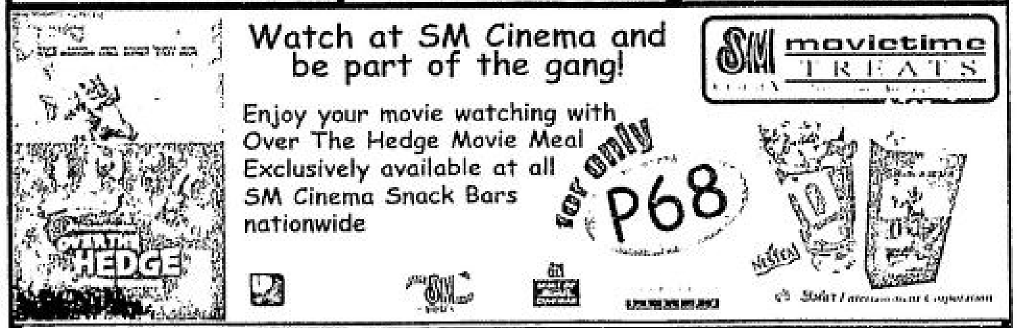

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# DID YOU KNOW...

## Whoa, Sir!

CANNES, FRANCE—British pop star Elton John launched an expletive-laden tirade against the press on Saturday while presenting an award during the annual film festival.

Everything seemed to go smoothly enough as John presented the Chopard trophy to Canadian actor Kevin Zegers, who co-starred in the film "Transamerica" with Felicity Huffman.

"He (Zegers) is only 21 years old, already he showed incredible talent and maturity," said John, wearing dark glasses and accompanied by actress Elizabeth Hurley.

"I sincerely believe he will be a huge star and a great actor for many, many years to come," he continued.

Then, as photographers called out during his address, he exploded: "If you saw 'Transamerica'... I'm talking... you f--kwit, f--king photographers ... you should be shot, you should all be shot. Thank you."

Handing the award to a smiling Zegers, he added: "They're a nightmare." *Reuters*

# FEEDBACK

From page A2-1

nationwide revenues of "Da Vinci," P14.11 million.

In any case, the overall ranking is not affected by the correction.

"Da Vinci" still outgrossed "M:i:III" in two instances—Metro Manila: P11.6 million vs P10.2 million; nationwide: P14.11 million vs P12.7 million.

A source from the distributor of "Da Vinci" said "P10.1 million" was the only figure Columbia had of the first-day earnings of "M:i:III."

## Parochial

From Ting Bongco (phogays@yahoo.com), 3 Phan Van Dat Street, District 1, HCMC, Vietnam:

Myopic. Antiquated. Self-righteous. Ignorant. Parochial. Ridiculous.

These words fittingly describe the stand of the Philippine Alliance Against Pornography Inc. against the commercial exhibition of "The Da Vinci Code."

We must, as an apparently democratic society, resist on the strongest possible grounds moves that constrict our free will, that undermine our right to choose which film to view, that underestimate and insult our level of judgment.

This group's stance belongs to the medieval times, and does not have a place in a world and in a period where free sharing of information is mandatory for intellectual, cultural and economic progress. And this is *not* what our country needs, please!

# Rusty provinces, more English improbement and other boob-tube booboos

**VIEWFINDER**

*Nestor U. Torre*

HOST: WHAT IS YOUR HOME PROVINCE known for—what's unusual about it?

Guest: Unlike Manila, its old churches, beautiful natural wonders and slow way of life make it one of the most rusty provinces in the country!

(*Ay, kinalawang ang probinsya niya!*)

* * *

Host: What do you remember most about the '50s and the '60s?

Guest: The food! It was simple but filling and delicious—and quick, also. Especially, the fast Chinese food served at—what was that place?—Mamang Look?

(No, Ma Mon Luk!)

* * *

Host: We know that your family is hard-up, so we asked one of our sponsors to give you a four-year college scholarship!

Guest: *Naku, salamat po!*

Host: Isn't that great? *Hindi mo na kailangang maghanap ng trabaho, kasi magiging* college graduate *ka na!*

(*Ano daw?!*)

* * *

Host: Some people say the *masa* has a hard time relating to you because you look rich.

Guest: Oh, no, I'm not! I need this job, so I want to make it in show biz. I was not born with a spoon in my mouth!

(—Not even a wooden one?)

* * *

Host: Is this a difficult dish to prepare? Will it take long?

Guest chef: No, we can do it fast—it takes but all 30 minutes only to roast!

(That fast, huh?)

* * *

Host: How can the Philippines compete better in the call center boom?

Guest: Like in our company, we need more English improbement.

(Look who's talking...)

* * *

Host: What was your reaction when you heard that your relative had succeeded in his mission?

Guest: We feeled very happy and proud!

(*Ay*, we feeled!)

Host: When will your new organization have its first meeting?

Guest: We will meet May 16 of this month.

(*Kulit!*)

* * *

Host: Do you have a sideline? What is it?

Guest: I'm a dance tractor!

(Dance tractor?—Oh, dance instructor!)

* * *

Host: Do you think your company will achieve your goal for 2006?

Guest: Definitely, if we work hard, we will go high on the heels of the traditional industry leader in our field.

(—Wearing high heels?!)

* * *

Host: What is your role in your new movie?

Guest: I play a former prostitoot.

(*Ay*, prostitoot!)

* * *

Host: What is your father's position in your company? Is he already retired?

Guest: No, he's still the presently incumbent president.

(Presently *na*, incumbent *pa!*)

* * *

Host: What are your plans for the future?

Guest: I don't plan. I just do whatever it comes my way!

(Quote, unquote!)

* * *

Host: Tell us about your next project.

Guest: We're publishing a coffee book table!

(—You mean, a coffee-table book!)

* * *

Host: Is your mother still working as a teacher?

Guest: No, she's already retied.

(—Untie her, quick!)

## 'Luneta'

THE 27 PARTICIPANTS in Gantimpala Theater Foundation's annual musical-theater workshop under **Roeder Camañag** will perform in "Luneta, A Musical Revue," on May 27, 6 p.m., at Rizal Park's open-air auditorium. Call 5280607.

## Celebrity endorsers

SUN Cellular's postpaid celebrity endorsers, **Marc Nelson** and **Hindy Tantoco**, recently visited the Sun Cellular office and The Sun Shop at Robinsons Galleria for the Sun Treat event. The network that pioneered in offering affordable unlimited call and text services is growing briskly.

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|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | OVER THE HEDGE | 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00 | GP |
| 2 | X-MEN 3 | 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 8:10, 10:50 | PG-13 |
| 3 | THE DA VINCI CODE | 12:30, 3:50, 7:15, 10:40 | R-18 |
| 4 | THE DA VINCI CODE | 11:30, 2:40, 6:00, 9:30 | R-18 |

SHANG CINEPLEX

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | X-MEN 3 | MTRCB. PG-13 | 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30 |
| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE | MTRCB R-18 | 1:20, 4:25, 7:30, 10:35PM LMF |
| 3 | THE DA VINCI CODE | MTRCB R-18 | 12:30, 3:35, 6:40, 9:45PM |
| 4 | OVER THE HEDGE | MTRCB: GP | 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:10 |
| PREMIERE THEATRE | THE DA VINCI CODE | MTRCB R-18 | 11:45, 2:50 |

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| X-MEN: THE LAST STAND PG13<br>1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30 | OVER THE HEDGE G<br>12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00 | X-MEN: THE LAST STAND PG13<br>12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:00,9:20 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
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| G4 GLORIETTA 4 | 1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | 2 THE DA VINCI CODE | 3 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS | |
| | 4 THE DA VINCI CODE | 5 OVER THE HEDGE | 6 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | 7 THE DA VINCI CODE |
| GB1 GREENBELT 1 | 1* THE DA VINCI CODE | 2 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | | |
| GB3 GREENBELT 3 | 1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND 12:25, 2:45, 5:05, 9:45 GUARANTEED SEATS | 2 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND 1:35, 3:55, 6:15, 10:55 GUARANTEED SEATS | | |
| | 3 OVER THE HEDGE 12:50, 2:55, 5:00, 7:05, 9:10, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS | 4 THE DA VINCI CODE GUARANTEED SEATS | 5 THE DA VINCI CODE GUARANTEED SEATS | |
| ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER | 1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | 2 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | | |
| | 3 THE DA VINCI CODE | 4 OVER THE HEDGE | 5 THE DA VINCI CODE | |
| ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU | 1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | 2 THE DA VINCI CODE | 3 THE DA VINCI CODE | 4 OVER THE HEDGE |
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| | 3 OVER THE HEDGE | 4 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND | 5 THE DA VINCI CODE | |

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Cinema 1** - 12:05 PM, 2:30, 4:55, 7:20, 9:45
Cinema 3* - 12:50 PM, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30
Cinema 6 - 11:20 AM, 1:45 PM, 4:10, 6:35, 9:00

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 12:25 PM, 2:45, 5:05, 9:45
Cinema 2* - 1:35 PM, 3:55, 6:15, 10:55

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:20 PM, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 3:20 PM, 5:40, 8:50

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:00 NN, 2:15 PM, 4:30, 6:30, 8:50, 10:50
Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20

MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1 - 12:00 NN, 2:25 PM, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40
Cinema 5 - 11:30 AM, 1:55 PM, 4:20, 6:45, 9:10

AYALA CENTER CEBU
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| 2 (DOLBY) | DA VINCI CODE *R18* |
| 3 (DOLBY) | DA VINCI CODE *R18* |
| 4 (DOLBY) | OVER THE HEDGE *GP* |

**PREMIERE**

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**Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA**
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

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| 1 (DDS) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 2 (SDDS) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 3 (DTS) | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 4 GOLD (DTS) | OVER THE HEDGE |
| 5 GOLD (DOLBY) | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 6 GOLD (SDDS) | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 7 GOLD (DOLBY) | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 8 (DOLBY [illegible]) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 9 (DOLBY [illegible]) | POSEIDON |
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**EASTWOOD CINEMAS**
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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

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**Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall**
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| 3 (DTS) | THE DA VINCI CODE |
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| 3 (DOLBY) | BANDIDAS |

**Cinema 2000 Metrotown**
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

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| 1 | SLITHER |
| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 3 (DOLBY) | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 4 (DTS) | X - MEN - 3 |

**Cinema 2000 Waltermart**
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

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| 1 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 3 (DOLBY) | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |

**Cinema 2000 Waltermart**
(Gapan)

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| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE |

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| 2 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 3 | OVER THE HEDGE |
| 4 | THE DA VINCI CODE |

**Blue Wave**
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

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| 2 (DOLBY) | OVER THE HEDGE |
| 3 (DOLBY) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 4 (DOLBY) | THE DA VINCI CODE |

**SUPER CINERAMA**
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

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| 2 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 3 | POSEIDON |
| 4 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 5 | OVER THE HEDGE |

**starmall EDSA SHAW**
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

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| 3 | X - MEN - 3 |
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| 5 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |

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(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

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| 2 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 3 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 4 | OVER THE HEDGE |

**Masagana CINEMA**
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

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| 1 | POSEIDON / MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 2 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 3 | OVER THE HEDGE |

**Lianas Cinema**
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

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| 1 | SILENT HILL |
| 2 | PLEASE CALL |

**Lianas Cinema**
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| 1 (SDDS) | THE DA VINCI CODE |
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**Lianas MovieCity**
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| 3 (DTS) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 4 | OVER THE HEDGE |
| 5 | MISSION IMPOSIBLE-3 |

**Center Mall Cinema**
Bagulo Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

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| 1 | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 2 | X - MEN - 3 |

**THEATRES**
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025

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| 3 | X - MEN - 3 |

**Jade Cinema**
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

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| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 3 (DTS EX) | X - MEN - 3 |
| 4 | OVER THE HEDGE |

**Fiesta World Mall**
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

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| 1 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 2 | REINCARNATION |
| 3 | THE DA VINCI CODE |
| 4 | MISSION IMPOSIBLE-3 |

**PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC**
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

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| 1 | X - MEN - 3 |
| 2 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 3 | RESERVED |
| 4 | RESERVED |

**Centre Plaza Cinema**
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

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|---|---|
| 1 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3 |
| 2 | POSEIDON |

**Berma Cinema**
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| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | PLEASE CALL |
| 2 | PLEASE CALL |

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# OPENING TODAY

## X-Men III: The Last Stand

Stars Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen, Anna Paquin, Famke Janssen

Directed by Brett Ratner

A corporation discovers a cure for mutation. As mutants contemplate their uncertain future, "the war to end all wars" ensues between mutant leaders Charles Xavier (Stewart) and Magneto (McKellen). The former espouses tolerance; the latter, the total annihilation of humans. Amid the chaos, Wolverine falls in love with Jean Grey, who rises from her watery grave as Phoenix (Janssen). Joe Utichi of Film Focus points out: "[It] had the potential to be the greatest of all three [X-Men] films... [but] is a dire disappointment." Louise Keller of Urban Cinefile raves, however: "...Flaming cars, levitating houses, walls of water... The stunts are non-stop and we marvel at all of them..." Concurs Andrew L. Urban of Urban Cinefile: "The filmmakers have turbo-charged the franchise for this closing chapter of the trilogy... like a super-dome-sized magic show." Comments Rich Cline of the Shadows on the Wall website: "[The director] knows how to handle both action and drama onscreen, even if subtlety falls by the wayside... feels like a fan-boy fantasy."

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2:26 / 3:00 / 3:35 / 4:45
5:20 / 5:55 / 7:05 / 7:40
8:15 / 9:25 / 10:00
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

**THE DA VINCI CODE**
11:15 / 11:50 / 12:25 / 1:00
2:15 / 2:50 / 3:25 / 4:00
5:15 / 5:50 / 6:25 / 7:00
8:15 / 8:50 / 9:25 / 10:00

**MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3**
1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 10:00

**OVER THE HEDGE**
1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00

**PLATINUM CINEMA**
**THE DA VINCI CODE**
12:25 / 3:25 / 6:25 / 9:25

**Ali MALL CINEMAS**

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| 1 | X-MEN 3 | 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35 / 6:45 / 8:55 |
| 2 | THE DA VINCI CODE | 12:05 R3 / 2:20 / 5:15 / 8:10 |
| 3 | THE DA VINCI CODE | 12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50 |
| 4 | OVER THE HEDGE | 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00 |
| 5 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: 3 | 12:15 / 2:55 / 5:35 / 8:15 |

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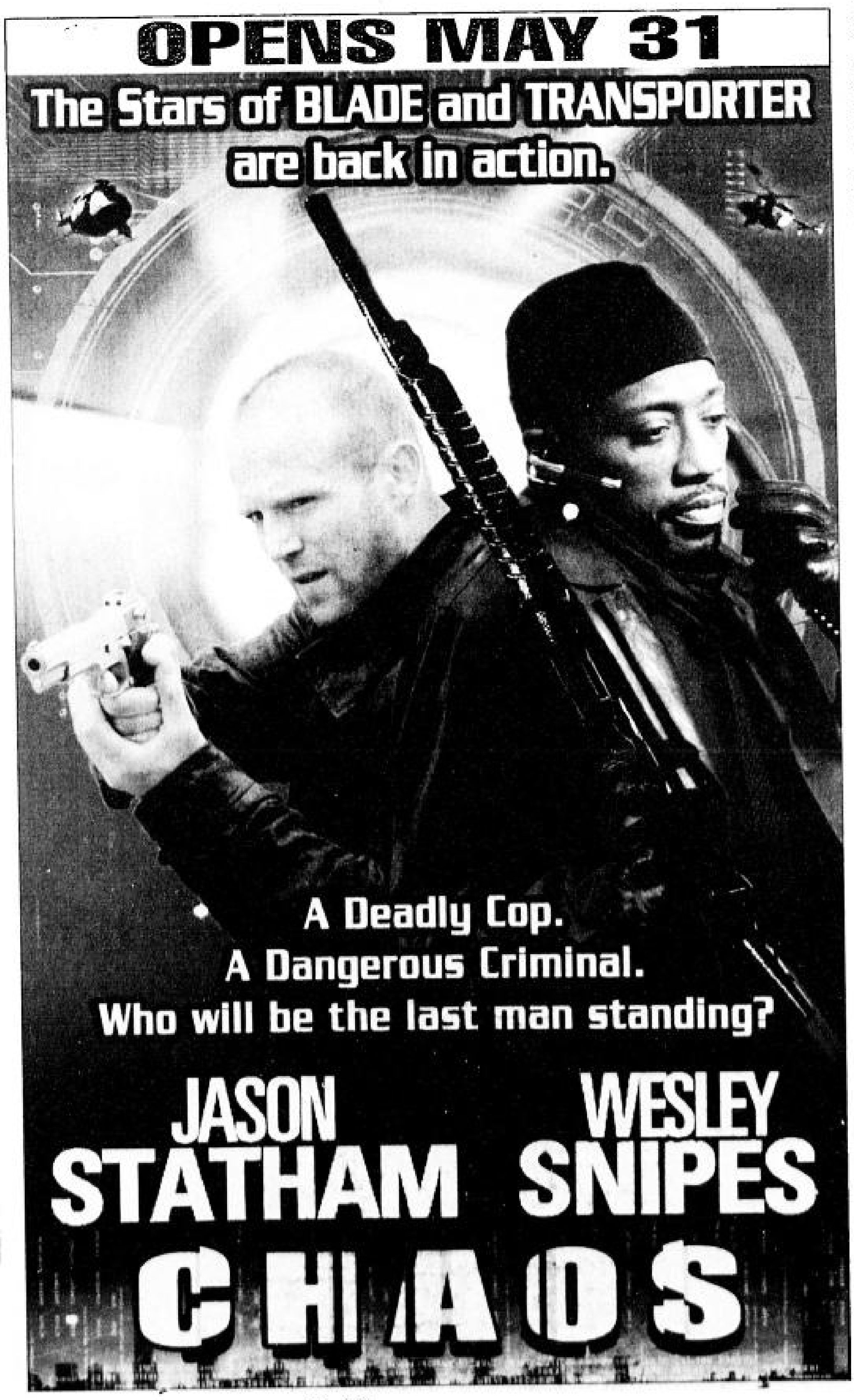
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CHAOS

# SHOW TIME

TITO Nieves

## Salsa night on June 3

TITO NIEVES, great salsero of the 1980s, '90s performs in "Tito Nieves... Live in Manila" at the PICC Reception Hall on Saturday, June 3.

Nieves promises Manila's Latin-salsa lovers an unforgettable night.

He is bringing his 16-piece band direct from Orlando, Florida.

Call 8919999, 8969939 or 0917-6077971.

## Bloomfields

The Bellevue Hotel's 20/20 bar invites night owls to two action-packed nights of vintage rock 'n' roll featuring The Bloomfields, starting May 31. Call 7718181.

## Today

Mossimo Bikini Summit Grand Prix at the NBC Tent

Jojo A All the Way at RJ Guitar Bar

K and The Boxers at Klownz Araneta

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Jeli Mateo at the Manila Pavilion Hotel's Boulvar Lounge

RJ at Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge; 9 p.m.

## Tomorrow

Jennifer Palor at the Manila Pavilion Hotel's Boulvar Lounge

Jojo A All the Way at RJ Guitar Bar

## May 26

Silver: The Songs of Vehnee Saturno at the Araneta Coliseum

# Cinemalaya exec not optimistic about 'Anino' makers' petition

**By Marinel R. Cruz**

FILM PRODUCER ROBBIE TAN, CHAIR OF the Cinemalaya production monitoring team, has admitted he is not optimistic about the chances of a recall on the disqualification of "Mga Anino sa Apuhap."

The competition is slated in July.

"The members of the organizing committee have reviewed the case of 'Anino' and our decision to disqualify it was unanimous," Tan told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview on Monday.

Even competition director Laurice Guillen-Feleo sounds unequivocal: "This is a competition. It wouldn't be fair to the other participants if we retracted. There are rules that (Jon) Lazam's group failed to comply with."

Lazam is the writer and project proponent of "Mga Anino sa Apuhap," one of the 10 finalists in the festival's full-length feature category. Lazam co-wrote "Anino" with Ronald Verzo.

In his letter to Feleo on May 15, Lazam had sought an "audience with the committee... to appeal my case."

He added: "I maintain that the grounds for such a decision are suspect, and that the judgment impinges on my rights as recipient of the [P500,000] grant from the foundation, and as an independent filmmaker whose freedom of expression has been compromised in the process."

## Peer support

Some 45 artists and key industry personnel affixed their signature to Lazam's letter as a sign of their support.

Lazam's request had been denied, he told INQUIRER Entertainment last week.

In a letter to Lazam dated May 10, Feleo and Nestor Jardin, festival director, had cited the failure of Lazam's group to submit certain requirements—script, budget, timetable—in time for a Feb. 24 deadline as one of the causes of "Anino's" disqualification. The letter also cited the group's expressed "intention" to submit the film's final copy on June 15, or weeks beyond the May 30 cut-off date.

Feleo, in another letter dated May 16, said the group has proposed a counterpart financing plan that the committee found "unacceptable."

> Some 45 artists and industry personnel have signed the filmmaker's letter as a sign of support

According to Tan, of the 10 finalists, only Lazam's group failed to comply with the Feb. 24 deadline, which had been included in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that Lazam signed with Cinemalaya on Feb. 23.

But Sigrid Andrea Bernardo, "Anino" co-director, insisted there were other groups that failed to complete the requirements. "I'm sure of this," she said. "I asked around."

## Disheartened

Tan said: "I feel disheartened about what happened to Jon's team. I really pushed for this film. I even tried calling some industry people, asking them to help. What more could I do if Jon's group couldn't comply?"

Bernardo said "Anino's" production team was "grateful" to Tan for all his help. "We're not blaming him for what happened. We know that he's just doing his job. We just wished we were given a chance to explain our side to the committee heads (Jardin and Feleo)."

**"ANINO" co-director Sigrid Andrea Bernardo, left, and writer Jon Lazam.**

# ROUNDUP

## Blessing 'Da Vinci'

LOS ANGELES—Moviegoers gave their blessing to the "The Da Vinci Code" over the weekend, spending an estimated $77 million to see the Tom Hanks religious thriller.

While the film did not set a domestic box office record, it was the largest weekend opening of the year so far and became the second largest worldwide release after "Star Wars: Episode III." It garnered some $224 million worldwide, according to Sony Pictures.

The film also was the best domestic opening for both Hanks and director Ron Howard.

**Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official trackers:**
1) "The Da Vinci Code," $77M; 2) "Over the Hedge," $37.2M; 3) "Mission: Impossible III," $11M; 4) "Poseidon," $9.2M; 5. "RV," $5.1M; 6) "See No Evil," $4.4M; 7) "Just My Luck," $3.4M; 8) "An American Haunting," $1.7M; 9) "United 93," $1.4M; 10) "Akeelah and the Bee," $1M.

## Back to old habits

CANNES, France—When his Vietnam saga "Platoon" came out, Oliver Stone felt it was a painful reminder of an aggressive mentality he hoped America had left behind.

Two decades later, the country has fallen back on old habits, Stone said Sunday at the Cannes Film Festival, where "Platoon" had a 20th anniversary screening in advance of a new DVD edition coming May 30.

"It's a shame, because you make these movies, you hope that they will make people more conscious about what war is," Stone told The Associated Press in an interview alongside his three stars, Willem Dafoe, Charlie Sheen and Tom Berenger.

The Cannes screening of "Platoon" was preceded by footage of Stone's upcoming film "World Trade Center," starring Nicolas Cage in a Sept. 11 drama about two policemen trapped in the rubble of the twin towers after the terrorist attacks. *AP*

## Willis as a raccoon

CANNES, France—Bruce Willis plays an animated raccoon in "Over the Hedge," but he still gets to do what he does best: save the world.

Still at the festival, Willis told reporters Sunday that the DreamWorks Animation adventure about fuzzy woodland creatures marks the eighth time he's had to save the day in the movies.

Turns out it's a pretty thankless job.

"What I do want to say is that no one ever sent me any cards for saving the world," Willis said. "No Christmas cards, no thanks-yous. I was a little bummed out about that."

The news conference with Willis, William Shatner and Avril Lavigne, who provide voices of possums, and Nick Nolte, the voice of a bear, quickly turned into a comedy routine. Willis imitated Antonio Banderas' Puss in Boots from "Shrek 2," admitting he's always wanted to play a cat. Then he treated reporters to an imitation of a feline hacking up a fur ball.

A reporter from Hungary goofed, mixing up Nolte with Chuck Norris. Nolte's response had a touch of the absurd: He whipped out a harmonica and started playing. *AP*

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GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 12:25 PM, 2:45, 5:05, 9:45
Cinema 2* - 1:35 PM, 3:55, 6:15, 10:55
GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:20 PM, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 3:20 PM, 5:40, 8:50
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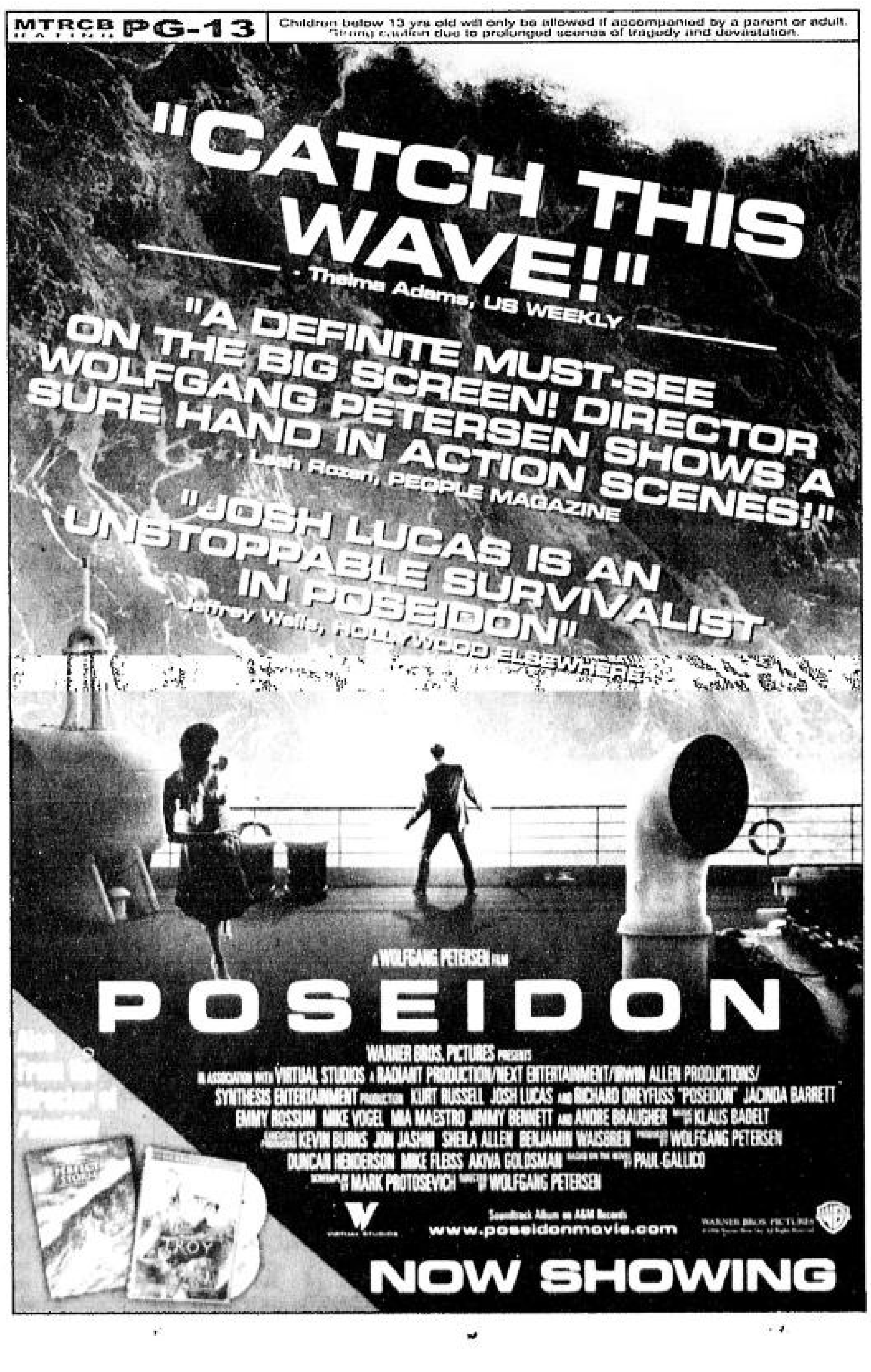
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:00 NN, 2:10 PM, 4:20, 6:30, 8:50, 10:50
Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20
MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1 - 12:00 NN, 2:25 PM, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40
Cinema 5 - 11:30 AM, 1:55 PM, 4:20, 6:45, 9:10
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 1:05 PM, 2:55, 5:05, 9:45
glorietta GREENBELT AYALA CENTER CEBU Ayala Malls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"A DEFINITE MUST-SEE ON THE BIG SCREEN! DIRECTOR WOLFGANG PETERSEN SHOWS A SURE HAND IN ACTION SCENES!" - Leah Rozen, PEOPLE MAGAZINE
"JOSH LUCAS IS AN UNSTOPPABLE SURVIVALIST IN POSEIDON!" - Jeffrey Wells, HOLLYWOOD ELSEWHERE
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# Final 'AI' showdown

## Southerner or LA lady? US chooses between Taylor and Kat today

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

IT IS THEIR DESTINY TO BE ON "AMERICAN Idol." The story of how top two finalists Katharine McPhee and Taylor Hicks got on the show seems to tell us so.

In a conference call arranged by Star World on Saturday, Katharine and Taylor, who will fight it out today for the coveted title, shared their experiences.

She would have graduated from the Boston Conservatory 10 days ago. Instead, Kat, who dropped out of school, sings for millions around the world today for the chance of a lifetime.

### No regrets

The sultry singer from Los Angeles, California, said she has no regrets. Taking a break from school opened many doors, she said, including "American Idol."

Taylor Hicks' lucky break appears to have been borne on the winds of Katrina. He was in New Orleans enroute to Memphis the night before the deadly hurricane hit. The Memphis auditions were cancelled. Instead of a refund, the airline gave Taylor a free ticket "to anywhere in America." He used the ticket later to fly to Las Vegas, where he caught up with the auditions there.

After completing the first semester of her sophomore year, Katharine, 21, met an agent who promised her TV roles. She was looking in that direction when she made it through the "Idol" tryouts in San Francisco.

Taylor, who made gray hair cool, recalled that his father had been less than enthusiastic about his plan to audition. The older Hicks told his son, "Why don't you just buy a lottery ticket?"

### 3 songs each

Judge Simon Cowell earlier declared Kat one of the best female vocalists by judge Simon Cowell. Having a vocal coach for a mom is her edge over Taylor.

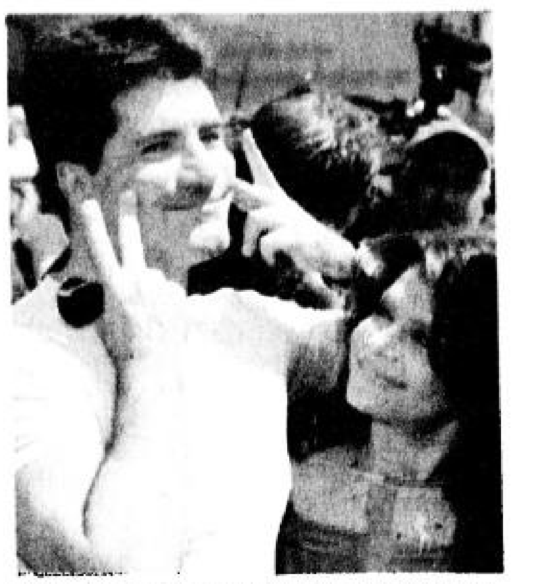
But the struggling musician from Birmingham, Alabama, has the advantage of experience, having performed in nightclubs since he was 16.

"He's so alive onstage," Kat says of her rival when asked what she thought he did better. Taylor returns the compliment: "It's so cool just to listen to her voice."

For the finale today, both Kat and Taylor get to sing three songs, two of which should be numbers they have previously performed on the show.

Taylor confessed that he never thought he would make it this far, "judging from Simon's early comments."

But, even Cowell, who has repeatedly criticized the 29-year-old as "performing like he's drunk," has yielded and, last week, predicted that Taylor would be "it."


SIMON Cowell and Paula Abdul. He's picked Hicks. She grieved on-cam when finalist No. 3, Elliott Yamin, was booted last week.

Katharine's fan base has obviously shown some muscle as well. She was in the bottom two and almost got the boot two weeks ago.

"I thought I was the one going home then (it was Chris Daughtry), and I actually felt shitty that I didn't," Kat said.

### Gimmicks

Taylor said he might sneak in a harmonica solo or two in today's showdown at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. He said he tried to do that in previous performances but wasn't allowed to. Whatever happens, he said, he's "gonna have fun and make America smile."

What about Kat's gimmick? "I don't have any," she said. "[Maybe] I will just wear a really hot dress and a nice pair of shoes."

As the top two contenders, Taylor and Kat are guaranteed separate record deals. Her album, Katharine said, would be along the lines of Joss Stone and Norah Jones. Taylor—who had written and recorded songs before "Idol," said he would like to re-produce and re-record those songs for commercial release.

"I want cutting-edge music in my album," Taylor insisted.

### Easy does it

Asked how he hits the high notes, remembers the words *and* dances a storm, he simply answered, "Dancing is a lot easier than hitting the high notes!"

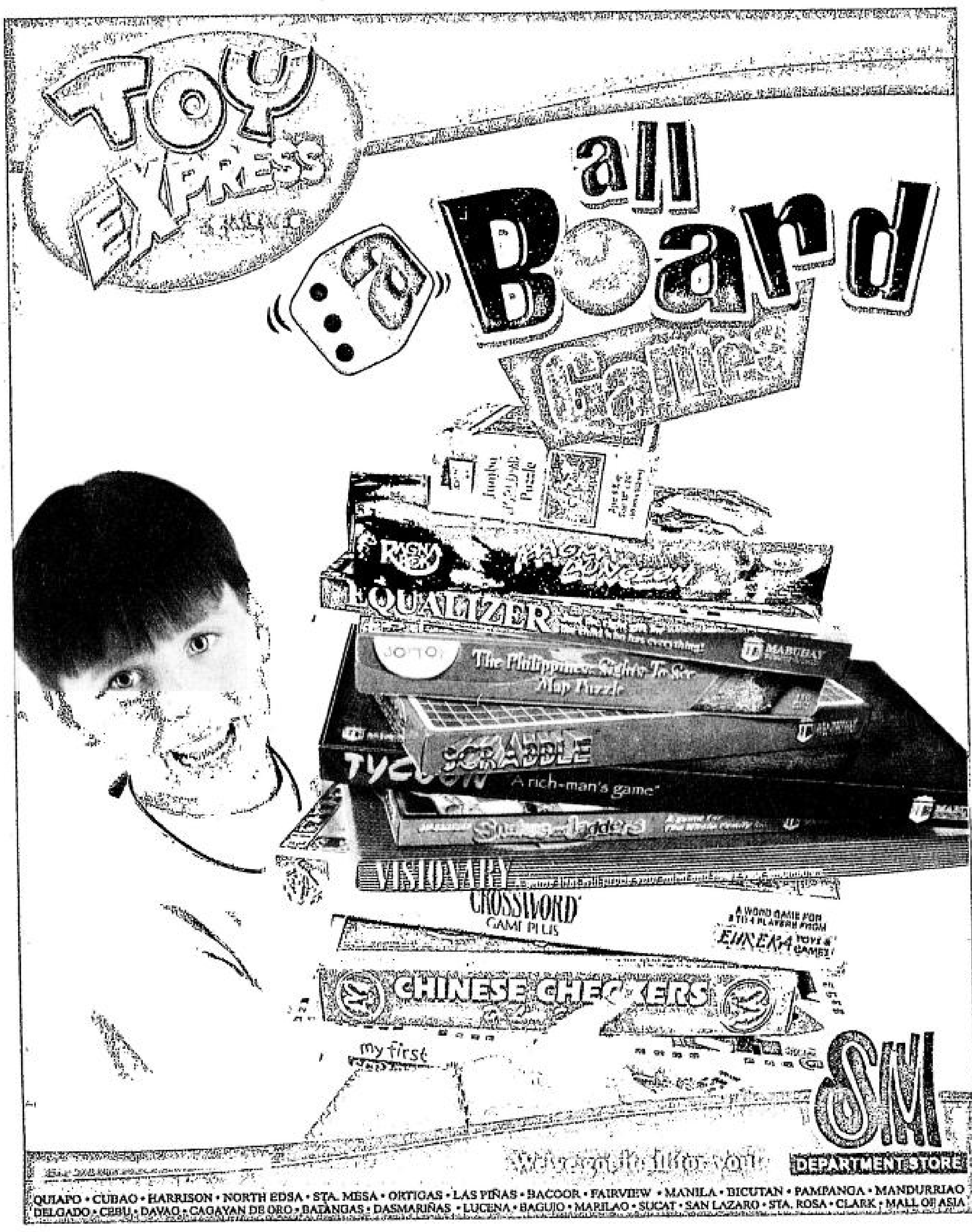
In an earlier interview he was asked, what he would do if he didn't win.

"I'll probably go back to being broke," he replied in jest.

More recently, he was asked if he would consider living in Hollywood henceforth.

Taylor said, "You know what, I'll probably live in the tour bus. That has always been my dream."

*(Catch the performance finale on Starworld today (Manila time) 5 p.m., with replays at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Grand finale will be aired here in real time tomorrow at 8 a.m., with replays at 5 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.)*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# Mr. Kilmer, is that you?

RUSHES

INQUIRER RECEIVED VIA TEXT THIS LINE supposedly delivered by Pampanga Governor Mark Lapid in "Apoy sa Dibdib ng Samar," an "environmental" movie: "Oo, *inaamin ko sila ay mga yakal, lawaan, apitong at narra at kami ay saging lang. Pero maghanap kayo ng puno sa buong Pilipinas, saging lang ang may puso.*"

Sure beats Joyce Kilmer.

### Bursting Paolo's Bubbles

MODEL Bubbles Paraiso, host of the Studio 23 show "It's a Guy Thing," insists that her separation from boyfriend Paolo Contis was "amicable."

"When we see each other, we're civil," she said.

Paolo is now linked to another beauty, Isabel Oli.

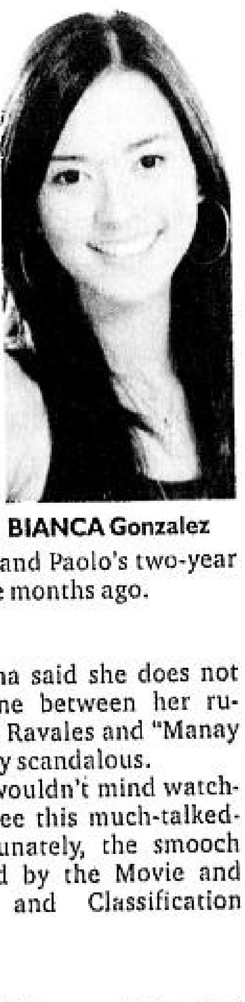
There's always been another Paolo in Bubbles' life, however. Hunky model Paolo Paraiso is her brother.

BUBBLES Paraiso

### When Bianca met Lino

TV DIRECTOR Lino Cayetano met current sweetheart Bianca Gonzalez on the set of the old ABS-CBN talent quest "Star Dance" last year. Bianca was one of the show's hosts; Lino, the director.

How's that for office romance?


BIANCA Gonzalez

### When Bernard met Meryll

BERNARD Palanca was introduced to present love Meryll Soriano by Anne Curtis, erstwhile girlfriend of Bernard's cousin Paolo Araneta.

Meryll was Anne's co-star on the *fantaserye "Kampanerang Kuba."*

While Bernard and Meryll's relationship is going strong, Anne and Paolo's two-year romance went pfft five months ago.

### 'Manay Po'

SEXY actress Ara Mina said she does not find the kissing scene between her rumored boyfriend Polo Ravales and "Manay Po" co-star Luis Alandy scandalous.

Ara even said she wouldn't mind watching the film just to see this much-talked-about scene. Unfortunately, the smooch fest was disapproved by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

### Barbie Almalbis

SINGER Barbie Almalbis reportedly cried when she heard of the rumor romantically linking her to fellow performer Alza Seguerra. And for a reason, too. The pretty singer is engaged to Martin Honasan, son of former Sen. Gringo.

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As of 5 p.m., May 23, 2006

# Banco de Oro, EPCIBank merger fizzles out

## Bank chair says SM group offer has lapsed

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MERGER PROPOSAL between Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Equitable PCIBank has fizzled out, at least for now, amid the continuing squabble among EPCIBank shareholders.

EPCIBank chair Corazon dela Paz announced during the bank's stockholders' meeting yesterday that BDO's merger offer had lapsed.

"Right now, there's no merger proposal on the table," Dela Paz stressed.

In a separate interview, bank vice chair Teresita Sy, the chief representative of the SM group that owns the single biggest stake in EPCIBank at 34 percent—said they were not pursuing any new proposal for now.

"We have other business interests aside from Equitable PCIBank," Sy said.

She added that the SM group was not keen on buying the shares held by the minority stockholders, principally the state-owned Government Service Insurance System and the Romualdez family.

These minority groups have opposed BDO's attempt to take over EPCIBank, claiming the offer was detrimental to the bank's shareholders.

GSIS president Winston Garcia was absent during the stockholders' meeting yesterday, but a number of lawyers engaged the board in a lengthy debate over whether the Romualdez family should be allowed to vote on its shares.

In the end, the Romualdez family was barred from voting on its 7.13-percent stake in the bank.

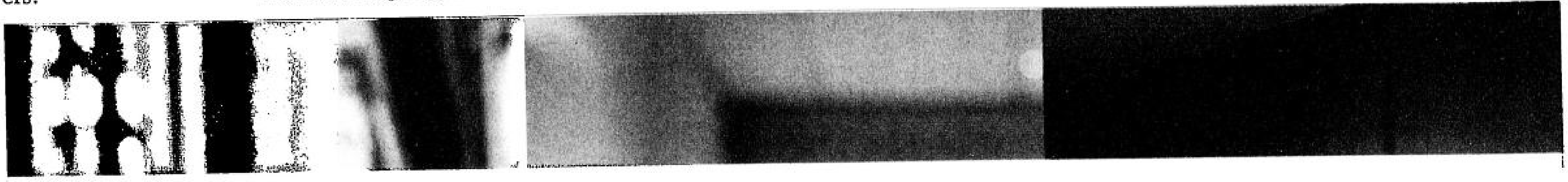
EPCIBank's corporate secretary Sabino Acut Jr. did not allow the Romualdez's Trans-Middle East Equity Philippines Inc. from voting on its 51.8 million shares by virtue of a restraining order from the Sandiganbayan.

Trans-Middle East filed a separate petition with the Supreme Court, but in the absence of a temporary restraint order on the execution of the Sandiganbayan' order, the corporate secretary complied with the latter.

The counting of the votes for directors of EPCIBank was still ongoing as of presstime.

BDO's controversial merger offer was to swap up to 1.6 of its

BANCO/B3



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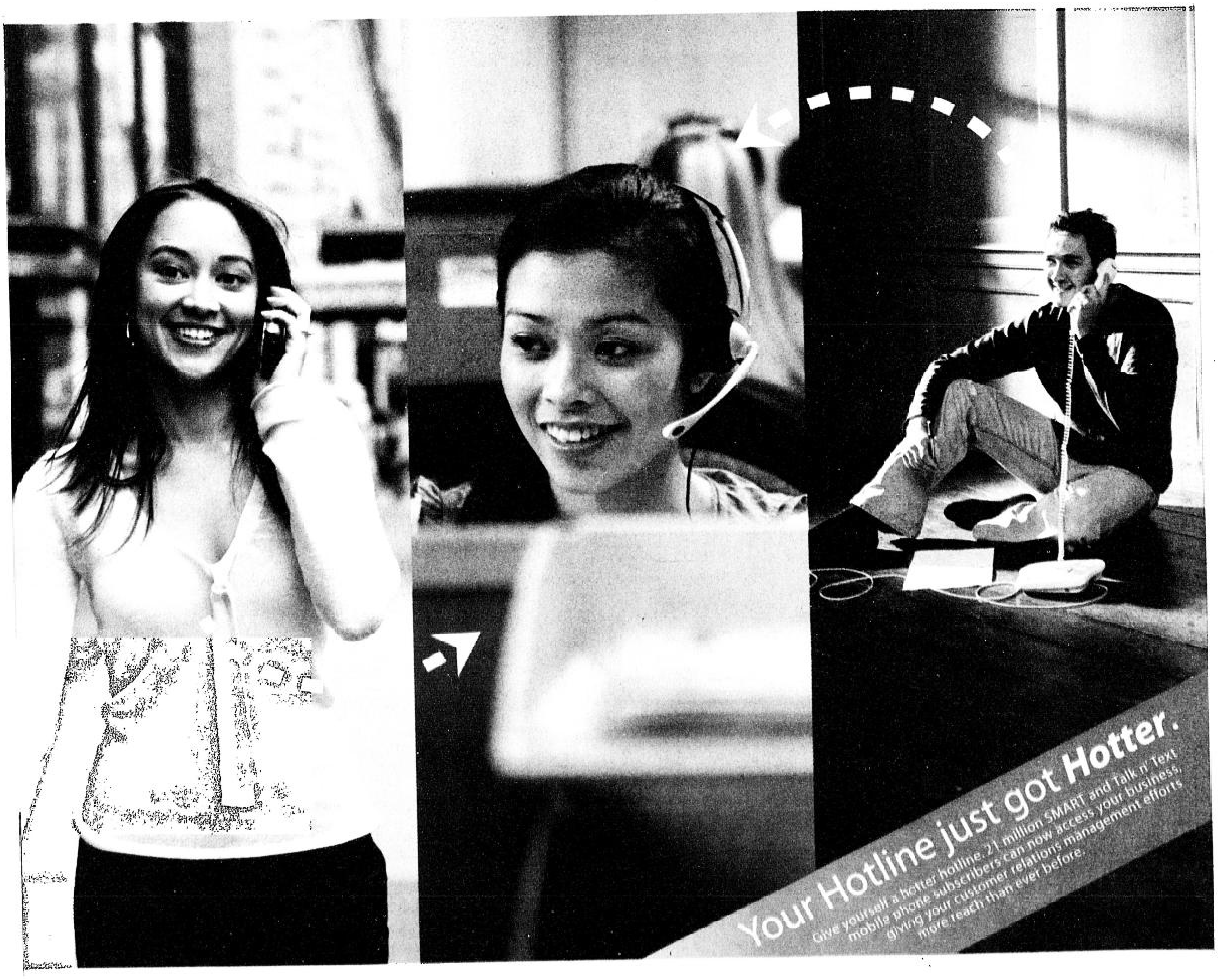
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# Stocks plummet on US rate fears

## Bourse posts biggest single-day drop in 7 years

**By Elizabeth L. Sanchez**

SHARE PRICES CLOSED SHARPLY lower yesterday, losing 3.97 percent in the biggest single day loss in nearly seven years as local investors caught up with Monday's global downturn, dealers said.

The market, open for only three hours a day, closed little changed Monday at a time with the regional bourses were showing relatively modest losses.

However, in the afternoon the region saw a massive sell-off as investors fretted about the possibility of higher interest rates and slower economic growth and yesterday, Manila was catching up with that lead.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 93.62 points to 2,264.36 after moving between 2,257.68 and 2,357.98.

It was its biggest one-day loss of points since July 27, 1999, when it shed 113 points to close at 2,263.12. It was the index's biggest percentage loss in 10 months since July 4 last year when it shed 4.2 percent.

But some fund managers called the market's drop yesterday as an "over-reaction," saying the PSE index's contraction was due after weeks of substantial gains. Year-to-date, the market was still up 8.03 percent.

Volume reached 5.35 billion shares worth P2.39 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 50.21 points to 1,419.36.

Losers outnumbered gainers 100 to seven, while 30 stocks were unchanged.

"Major global markets want to slow down their economies to healthier levels. If they use interest rates as a policy tool to achieve this objective, then it's possible that funds flowing into emerging markets might reverse," said Mark Canizares of Citiseconline.

STOCKS/ B4

### CURRENCIES

| May 23, 2006<br>Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.777122 | 1.000000 | 52.8240 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.006975 | 0.008975 | 0.4741 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.466195 | 1.886700 | 99.6630 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.100222 | 0.128966 | 6.8125 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.645504 | 0.830634 | 43.8774 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.696532 | 0.896298 | 47.3460 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.490793 | 0.631552 | 33.3611 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.584478 | 0.752106 | 39.7292 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 2.061768 | 2.653083 | 140.1465 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.207288 | 0.266738 | 14.0902 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.489248 | 0.629564 | 33.2561 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000083 | 0.000107 | 0.0057 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.020229 | 0.026031 | 1.3751 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.211646 | 0.272346 | 14.3864 |
| Euro | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.286800 | 67.9739 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.254377 | 0.327332 | 17.2910 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.337000 | 0.433651 | 22.9072 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134132 | 0.172601 | 9.1175 |
| India | Rupee | 0.017132 | 0.022046 | 1.1646 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.214260 | 0.275710 | 14.5641 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.069065 | 0.088873 | 4.6946 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.480565 | 0.618391 | 32.6659 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.117630 | 0.151366 | 7.9958 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000816 | 0.001050 | 0.0555 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.024182 | 0.031118 | 1.6438 |

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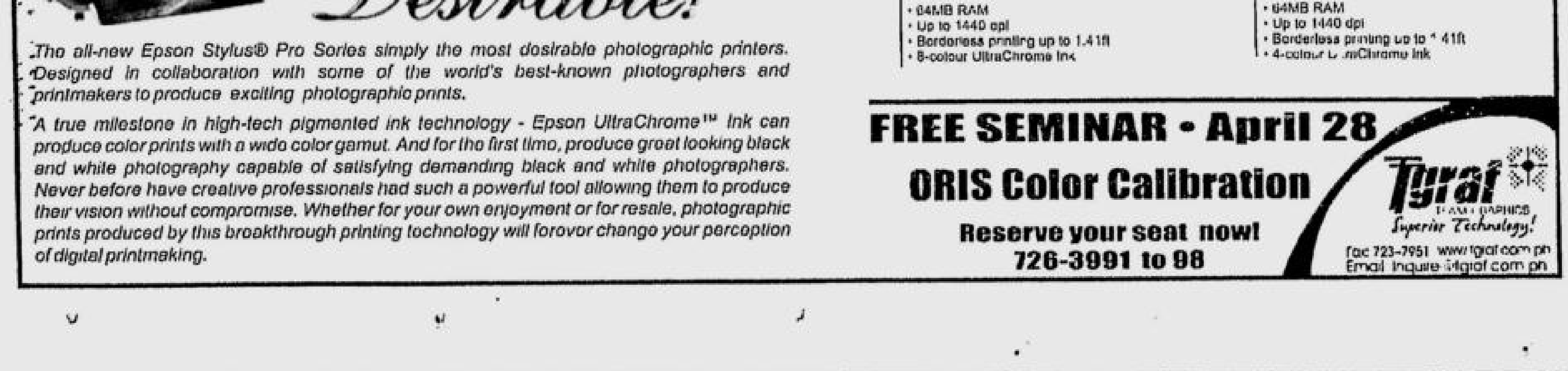
(As of May 23, 2006)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FINANCIAL** | | | | | |
| **BANKS** | | | | | |
| Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc. | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 76,000 |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 36.5 | 37 | 34.5 | 37 | 187,300 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 61.5 | 61.5 | 59.5 | 61.5 | 2,697,100 |
| China Banking Corp. | 890 | 890 | 885 | 885 | 2,800 |
| Citystate Savings Bank | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 400 |
| Export and Ind. Bank A | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 7,620,000 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 70 | 72 | 68.5 | 71 | 116,600 |
| International Exch. Bank | 41 | 41 | 40.5 | 40.5 | 53,000 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 38.5 | 39 | 37.5 | 38.5 | 593,600 |
| Phil. Savings Bank | 39 | 39.5 | 39 | 39 | 27,300 |
| Rizal Comm. Banking Corp. | 16.5 | 16.5 | 16 | 16.25 | 29,000 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 50 | 51 | 49 | 51 | 260,300 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 44.5 | 44.5 | 44.5 | 44.5 | 15,900 |
| **OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS** | | | | | |
| Bankard Inc. | 0.71 | 0.71 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100,000 |
| First Metro Invest. Corp. | 30.5 | 31.5 | 30.5 | 31.5 | 21,300 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 1650 | 1800 | 1650 | 1780 | 520 |
| PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 250,000 |
| Phil. Stock Exchange Inc. | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 2,500 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc. | 2070 | 2070 | 2045 | 2045 | 360 |
| Ivantage Corp. | 1.12 | 1.14 | 1.02 | 1.08 | 7,106,000 |
| **INDUSTRIAL** | | | | | |
| **ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER** | | | | | |
| First Gen Corp. | 46.5 | 47 | 46.5 | 47 | 637,700 |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp. | 46 | 46.5 | 45.5 | 46.5 | 1,956,900 |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.5 | 13.5 | 11,200 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 20.5 | 20.5 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 1,093,500 |
| Manila Water Co. Inc. | 7.3 | 7.3 | 7 | 7.1 | 4,409,000 |
| Petron Corp. | 4.45 | 4.45 | 4.2 | 4.25 | 6,636,000 |
| Salcon Power Corp. | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 220,000 |
| Trans-Asia Oil and Energy | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 960,000 |
| **FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO** | | | | | |
| Cen Azucar De Tarlac | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 1,000 |
| Cosmos Bottling Corp. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4,000 |
| Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 23 | 23.5 | 23 | 23.5 | 3,700 |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 35 | 36 | 35 | 35.5 | 393,000 |
| RFM Corp. | 0.73 | 0.73 | 0.72 | 0.72 | 200,000 |
| Roxas Holdings Inc. | 2.95 | 2.95 | 2.75 | 2.8 | 2,275,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 62.5 | 63.5 | 62.5 | 62.5 | 158,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 79.5 | 81 | 78.5 | 81 | 594,600 |
| Universal Robina Corp. | 20.5 | 20.5 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 2,020,100 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 1,510,000 |
| **CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.32 | 0.33 | 0.31 | 0.33 | 370,000 |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 1.44 | 1.44 | 1.26 | 1.34 | 3,938,000 |
| Holcim Philippines Inc. | 4.75 | 4.75 | 4.45 | 4.65 | 646,000 |
| Republic Cement Corp. | 1.24 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 30,000 |
| **DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS** | | | | | |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.115 | 0.115 | 0.095 | 0.1 | 14,410,000 |
| Macondray Plastics Inc. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 10,000 |
| Picop Resources Inc. | 0.0675 | 0.0675 | 0.0675 | 0.0675 | 4,000,000 |
| Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp. | 6.8 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 1,000 |
| **HOLDING FIRMS** | | | | | |
| Abacus Con Res & Hdg A | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.0065 | 0.0065 | 48,000,000 |
| Abacus Con Res & Hdg B | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 10,000,000 |
| Ayala Corp. | 410 | 410 | 392.5 | 392.5 | 684,640 |
| Alsons Cons. Res. Inc. | 0.52 | 0.52 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 480,000 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 5,253,000 |
| Ajo.Net Holdings Inc. | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 2,200,000 |
| A. Soriano Corp. | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.05 | 3.15 | 2,900,000 |
| APC Group Inc. | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.225 | 0.225 | 500,000 |
| Alcorn Gold Res. Corp. | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 33,000,000 |
| Anglo Phil Holdings Corp. | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.87 | 0.89 | 4,000,000 |
| Baguio Gold Holdings Corp. | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 101,000 |
| Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc. | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 17,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 1.12 | 1.12 | 1.02 | 1.04 | 10,713,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 4 | 4 | 3.75 | 3.8 | 1,413,000 |
| Filinvest Dev. Corp. | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.05 | 3.05 | 875,000 |
| House Of Investments Inc. | 1.32 | 1.32 | 1.32 | 1.32 | 20,000 |
| J.G. Summit Holdings Inc. | 7.1 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 1,241,000 |
| Keppel Holdings | 0.74 | 0.8 | 0.74 | 0.8 | 60,000 |
| Multitech Inv. Corp. | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 50,000 |
| Prime Orion Phils. Inc. | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 710,000 |
| Solid Group Inc. | 0.52 | 0.52 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 100,000 |
| Sinophil Corp. | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.135 | 0.14 | 7,200,000 |
| SM Investments Corp. | 229 | 230 | 224 | 224 | 26,490 |
| South China Resources Inc. | 1.04 | 1.04 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 185,000 |
| Seafront Resources Corp. | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.61 | 10,000 |
| Unioil Res. & Holdings Co. | 0.055 | 0.055 | 0.0525 | 0.0525 | 1,800,000 |
| Wellex Industries Inc. | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.105 | 0.105 | 2,890,000 |
| **PROPERTY** | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 13.5 | 13.5 | 12.75 | 12.75 | 20,494,900 |
| Belle Corp. | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.04 | 1.04 | 4,944,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 150,000 |
| Cebu Holdings Inc. | 2.24 | 2.24 | 2.1 | 2.14 | 2,480,000 |
| Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.205 | 0.205 | 0.205 | 0.205 | 680,000 |
| Empire East Land Inc. | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.59 | 0.6 | 33,310,000 |
| Ever-Gotesco Resources | 0.046 | 0.046 | 0.044 | 0.044 | 2,300,000 |
| Suntrust Home Dev. Inc. | 0.64 | 0.64 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 320,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.32 | 1.36 | 23,196,000 |
| Interport Res. | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 4,000,000 |
| Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc. | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 40,000 |
| Kuok Phil. Properties | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 230,000 |
| Fil-Estate Land Inc. | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.56 | 1,020,000 |
| Megaworld Corp. | 1.62 | 1.62 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 45,736,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.245 | 0.245 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 24,400,000 |
| MRC Allied Ind. Inc. | 0.235 | 0.24 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 210,000 |
| Robinsons Land Corp. | 10.75 | 11 | 10.75 | 11 | 366,200 |
| Phil Realty and Holdings | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 1,580,000 |
| SM Development Corp. | 1.78 | 1.78 | 1.6 | 1.66 | 540,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 8.5 | 8.5 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 10,740,000 |
| Uniwide Holdings Inc. | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 3,000,000 |
| **MEDIA** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 15.25 | 15.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 55,300 |
| Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp. | 1.26 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 10,000 |
| **TELECOMMUNICATIONS** | | | | | |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc. | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.1 | 1.12 | 8,674,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 910 | 910 | 840 | 840 | 130,410 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 3.85 | 3.85 | 3.45 | 3.7 | 13,306,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 1955 | 1960 | 1950 | 1960 | 163,740 |
| **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY** | | | | | |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.2 | 0.21 | 0.185 | 0.185 | 33,320,000 |
| Ionics Inc. | 1.86 | 1.86 | 1.86 | 1.86 | 20,000 |
| ISM Communications Corp. | 0.05 | 0.0525 | 0.048 | 0.0525 | 18,700,000 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.033 | 0.033 | 0.029 | 0.031 | 476,300,000 |
| **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Asian Terminals Inc. | 3 | 3 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 275,000 |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 13.5 | 13.5 | 12.5 | 12.75 | 1,713,200 |
| Keppel Phils. Marine Inc. | 0.98 | 1.04 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 210,000 |
| **HOTEL & LEISURE** | | | | | |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.56 | 1.56 | 2,001,000 |
| Waterfront Phils. Inc. | 0.57 | 0.59 | 0.55 | 0.59 | 1,880,000 |
| EDUCATION | | | | | |
| Centro Escolar University | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 3,000 |
| Far Eastern University | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 780 |
| iPeople Inc. | 2.9 | 2.95 | 2.85 | 2.9 | 393,000 |
| **DIVERSIFIED SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Macroasia Corp. | 2.12 | 2.12 | 2.06 | 2.08 | 190,000 |
| Paxys Inc. | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10.75 | 1,064,400 |
| MINING | | | | | |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. A | 3.5 | 3.6 | 2.75 | 3 | 10,762,000 |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. B | 3.55 | 3.65 | 2.85 | 3 | 4,887,000 |
| Abra Mining & Industrial | 0.008 | 0.0085 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 130,000,000 |
| Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't | 7.4 | 7.4 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 3,651,000 |
| Benguet Corp. A | 11.75 | 11.75 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 34,000 |
| Dizon Copper Silver Mines | 1.84 | 1.84 | 1.84 | 1.84 | 10,000 |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 45,920,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.32 | 0.34 | 24,370,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.025 | 0.025 | 0.022 | 0.023 | 331,600,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.024 | 0.024 | 247,400,000 |
| Omico Corp. | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 1,517,000,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. A | 4.35 | 4.4 | 3.6 | 3.75 | 22,974,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. B | 4.3 | 4.35 | 3.6 | 3.75 | 34,468,000 |
| Semirara Mining Corp. | 27.5 | 27.5 | 26 | 26.5 | 280,500 |
| United Paragon Mining Co. | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 200,000 |
| Vulcan Ind'l | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.5 | 0.51 | 2,660,000 |
| OIL | | | | | |
| Basic Consolidated Inc. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 2,100,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.012 | 0.012 | 0.01 | 0.011 | 1,598,800,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.012 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 426,600,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. A | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.06 | 3,465,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. B | 1.18 | 1.18 | 1.04 | 1.06 | 1,135,000 |
| Petroenergy Res. Corp. | 15 | 15.25 | 13 | 13.5 | 2,743,200 |
| **WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR) | 15.25 | 15.25 | 14 | 14 | 504,400 |



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### DISCLOSURES

**IVANTAGE Corp.** will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 30, 2 p.m. at the Emerald AB Function Room, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Quezon City.

***

**THE BANK of the Philippine Islands** has disclosed the completion of the sale of its Non-Performing Loans amounting to P6.3 billion to Avenue Capital Group on May 22.

***

**EMPIRE East Land Holdings Inc.** has declared the repurchase of 2 million shares at P0.625 each on May 22.

***

**DIZON Copper-Silver Mines Inc.** will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 30, 2 p.m. at the Gabaldon Room, Club Filipino, San Juan. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

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# Battle of court orders

**COCKTALES**

*Victor C. Agustin*

EQUITABLE PCIBANK MOVED YESTERDAY to unseat vice chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez as SM heiress Teresita Sy moved to pick up at least two more board seats in addition to her current four.

As of press time, votes were still being counted, with Romualdez unable to stop the bank from proceeding with the election despite obtaining a last-minute en banc Supreme Court order setting a hearing on June 6 on who shall be entitled to vote the sequestered Romualdez shares.

Romualdez obtained the court order after the Sandiganbayan, quoting an earlier court temporary restraining order, ruled that neither the Romualdez family nor the PCGG could vote the 7.8-percent Romualdez stake in Equitable PCIBank.

Romualdez ally GSIS president Winston Garcia was absent yesterday and was said to be in Europe attending a conference along with another GSIS director in the bank, Reynaldo Palmeiry. Another Romualdez ally, independent director Anthony Te, was also absent.

Amid legal questions and objections from lawyers from both camps, Sy's younger brother, nominee director Harley Sy, sat quietly observing, along with ex-Ramos executive secretary Peter Garrucho Jr., a nominee for independent director.

Even before the ballots were counted, Garrucho was already being tipped to head the bank's corporate governance committee.

Despite the setback, Romualdez gamely stayed during the balloting and counting, even managing to crack a few jokes with reporters.

Even the bank's top management officers, including main anti-Erap witness Clarissa Ocampo, were still waiting even at close of business hours for the results of the voting.

### Big bang at Alabang

AYALA Land, which operates the waterworks system within Ayala Alabang Village, is planning to increase the minimum rate for household consumption by a whopping 80 percent.

The high users, defined as those who consume more than 100 cubic meters a month, are on the other hand being hit by a 41-percent rate rise. Ayala Land last increased water rates in the upscale subdivision barely two years ago.

### SEC's turn to be tricked

AFTER having successfully duped the Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan as to the status of actual government control in the company, Philcomsat Holdings Corp. was again found to have foisted a disclosure trick, this time on the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Instead of a mere slap on the wrist, the SEC imposed a P274,000 fine on the Malacañang-led board of PHC.

The SEC had belatedly discovered that PHC had failed to disclose in its 2004 annual report that its then chair, Benito "Bomboy" Araneta, is a nephew of the current president, the ailing 90-year-old Manuel Nieto.

Araneta, the Erap holdover chair of Philcomsat Holdings Corp., relinquished the chairmanship to become an "independent" director after it was discovered that a total of P390 million of partially sequestered PHC funds were funneled to his first cousin, Antonio Araneta.

The acting PHC chair, the Malacañang-nominated Enrique Locsin who has allied himself with Araneta, is appealing the SEC fine.

### Heard through the grapevine

SUCH huge crowds swamped the Mall of Asia on its opening day Sunday that by noontime, the 5,000-car indoor park of the country's biggest mall was already full and overflow cars had spilled doubled-parked in both lanes of the two-kilometer stretch of the bayside boulevard.

An exuberant SM official estimated that about 20,000 cars and assorted vehicles and close to a million customers visited the new mall on that day alone.

*(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)*

# Banco de Oro . . .

From page B1

shares for every EPCIBank share. As a second option, BDO also offered to base the swap ratio on the book values of both banks to be assessed by an independent accounting firm using International Accounting Standards.

At the time BDO submitted the offer last January, EPCIBank shares traded at about P63 each.

The SM group became the single biggest stockholder in EPCIBank with the accumulation of shares from the stock market and the buyout of the Go family last year.

But to consummate the SM group's proposed "merger of equals" that could create the country's second biggest lender with combined assets of about P500 billion, BDO needed consent from 67 percent of EPCIBank's shareholders.

# NTC cracks down on illegal cell phone dealers, pawnshops

By Daxim L. Lucas

## Police to help in raids

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS have teamed up with police authorities in a bid to clamp down on the booming cellular phone trade which they believed was encouraging criminality.

In a statement issued yesterday, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) said it would start raiding unlicensed cell phone dealers, suppliers, retailers, service centers and those engaged in the selling of undocumented cell phones "particularly those coming from dubious sources."

The raids will be conducted by the NTC with the help of Philippine National Police personnel.

Earlier this month, the NTC and the PNP entered into a memorandum of agreement aimed at curbing cell phone-related criminal acts. The primary target of the deal is to address the illegal sale of lost or stolen cell phones as well as text scams.

The agreement was signed by NTC Commissioner Ronald O. Solis and PNP Director General Arturo C. Lomibao.

"Business establishments engaged in the sale, purchase, retail and servicing are advised to secure the necessary permits and licenses from the NTC regional offices before they can legally engage in the cell phone trade and servicing," the regulator said. "Failing to do so, these establishments shall be subject to stiff penalties and fines."

The NTC said that establishments caught operating without permits would be ordered to close shop and be levied a P5,000 fine.

Those engaged in the illegal purchase, sale and retail of units acquired from illegal sources will be fined P5,000 per unit or per violation, while those which purchase, sell or retail mobile phones without NTC approvals or acceptances will be fined the same amount per unit.

Firms found to be selling cell phones smuggled into the country will also be fined P5,000 per unit, as will those found to be servicing units without the required NTC permits.

NTC is giving emphasis on outlets that repair cell phones because some of them are used to unlock stolen units before they are resold to unsuspecting buyers.

The regulator also served warning to pawnshops engaged in the cell phone trade, some of which are suspected of being used to "launder" fenced units.

"Pawnshops which are also being unwittingly used by cell phone snatchers and robbers in order to dispose of the stolen goods are to be considered as cell phone retailers if they engage in the sale of second-hand phones," the NTC said.

The NTC also said that it would periodically publish in newspapers the number and description of cell phones in custody and those turned over or recovered by the police to inform their owners.

Meanwhile, the NTC also announced a Metro-wide inspection of cables and wires along main thoroughfares this weekend in response to a growing number of complaints about sagging cables and lines.

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# PNOC-EDC to enter Indonesia

## Gov't agency plans to operate, develop geothermal plants

**By Abigail L. Ho**

THE STATE-RUN PNOC-ENERGY Development Corp. may soon develop and operate geothermal power plants in Indonesia.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said in an interview that should the deal push through, the Philippine and Indonesian governments could work out a "barter" arrangement involving Indonesian coal.

"If they will get PNOC-EDC to do all their geothermal development, they (Indonesian government) can just pay us in coal, which we can use for our coal-fired power plants," he told the INQUIRER.

Apart from China, Indonesia is one of the country's main sources of coal to run its power plants.

If a coal barter arrangement would not be worked out, Balce said another option being explored was to have PNOC-EDC team up with some foreign firms to develop and operate various geothermal sites in Indonesia.

Negotiations for PNOC-EDC's entry into the Indonesian geothermal industry were ongoing, he said.

"The deal is in the making. We want to get into this as soon as possible," he said.

He said PNOC-EDC was actually already involved in developing a geothermal site in Manado near Sulawesi with Japanese firm Marubeni Corp. as its financial backer.

This was shelved, however, due to "internal problems" among Indonesia's various energy firms, he said.

"They were not able to resolve which of the state-owned energy firms should be involved in the development of the geothermal site. We're asking them to resolve this now as we want to revive the project," he said. "Maybe the Indonesian president could step in to resolve their issues."

He said the government, through PNOC-EDC, wanted to develop the Manado field up to production. It had a potential yield of at least 20 megawatts.

# Stocks plummet . . .

From page B2

Dealers said increases in interest rates overseas could prompt the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to follow suit at its policy meeting on June 1, so ending seven straight months of steady benchmark interest rates.

Other analysts were not as alarmed.

"This is a healthy correction since most of emerging markets are going down. It is not a selloff but just a correction after a bullish phase," said Fitzgerald Aclan, chief market strategist at Banco de Oro.

"We have been going up since the start of the year. We have been seeing the fundamentals intact. The market reaction was a bit of an exaggeration," Aclan added.

The rest of Asia has also been on a decline, with Tokyo's Nikkei Average falling 1.38 percent yesterday over the uncertainty in the outlook on U.S. interest rates.

Singapore's Straits Times Index slumped below 2,400 the first time since January.

On Monday, Indonesia fell 6 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 3.1 percent.

"This is all in line with the worldwide selloff," said Joseph Roxas, president at Eagle Equities Inc. *With a report from AFP*

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TransCo

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

### Section I.

### Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

**Supply and Delivery of Multifunction Revenue Meters**
**(Reference No.: PB060329-EL0046)**

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board,* intends to apply the sum of ***Php 20,000,000.00*** being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Multifunction Revenue Meters**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Revenue Meters* Delivery of the GOODS is required *within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting **May 24, 2006 to June 26, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00).*** The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 13, 2006 at 2:00 P.M.** at the same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 P.M. of June 29, 2006**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

| Form of Security | Amount |
|---|---|
| 1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC) | Php 200,000.00 |
| 2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC) | Php 300,000.00 |
| 3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC) | Php 500,000.00 |
| 4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC) | Php 20,000,000.00 |

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on **June 29, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.** at the *Admin Conference Rm. same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

*National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region*
*Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman*
*MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.*
*Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road*
*Diliman, Quezon City*
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*Website: www.transco.ph*

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 24 & 31, 2006)

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### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

| Item / Description | Approved Budget | Source of Funds |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Lot Impact Assessment of LANDBANK Information Technology (IT) Projects and System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) Documentation | P 4,000,000.00 | LBP Funds |

Interested consultants must submit their LOIs and secure the checklist of Eligibility Documents therefrom upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00. The deadline for the submission of Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: June 7, 2006, 1:00 PM at General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar Street, Malate, Manila. Only those that are eligible will be entitled to procure the Bid Documents, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00, and submit bids.

The BAC shall determine the eligibility of interested consultants in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) and other government rules and regulations. Other eligibility requirements are the following:

a. Must have at least five (5) years experience in conducting Post-Implementation Evaluation of System Project
b. Must have at least three (3) completed and/or on-going contracts similar to the item for bid, for the last two (2) years at least equal to 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract
c. Must have at least one (1) Post Implementation Evaluation and one (1) SDLC Documentation projects successfully implemented

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least 60% interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines.

LANDBANK shall evaluate bids using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation/Selection (QCBE/QCBS) procedure. The weights to be allocated for the Technical and Financial proposals shall be 75% and 25%, respectively. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Bid Documents.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - May 24 & 31, 2006)

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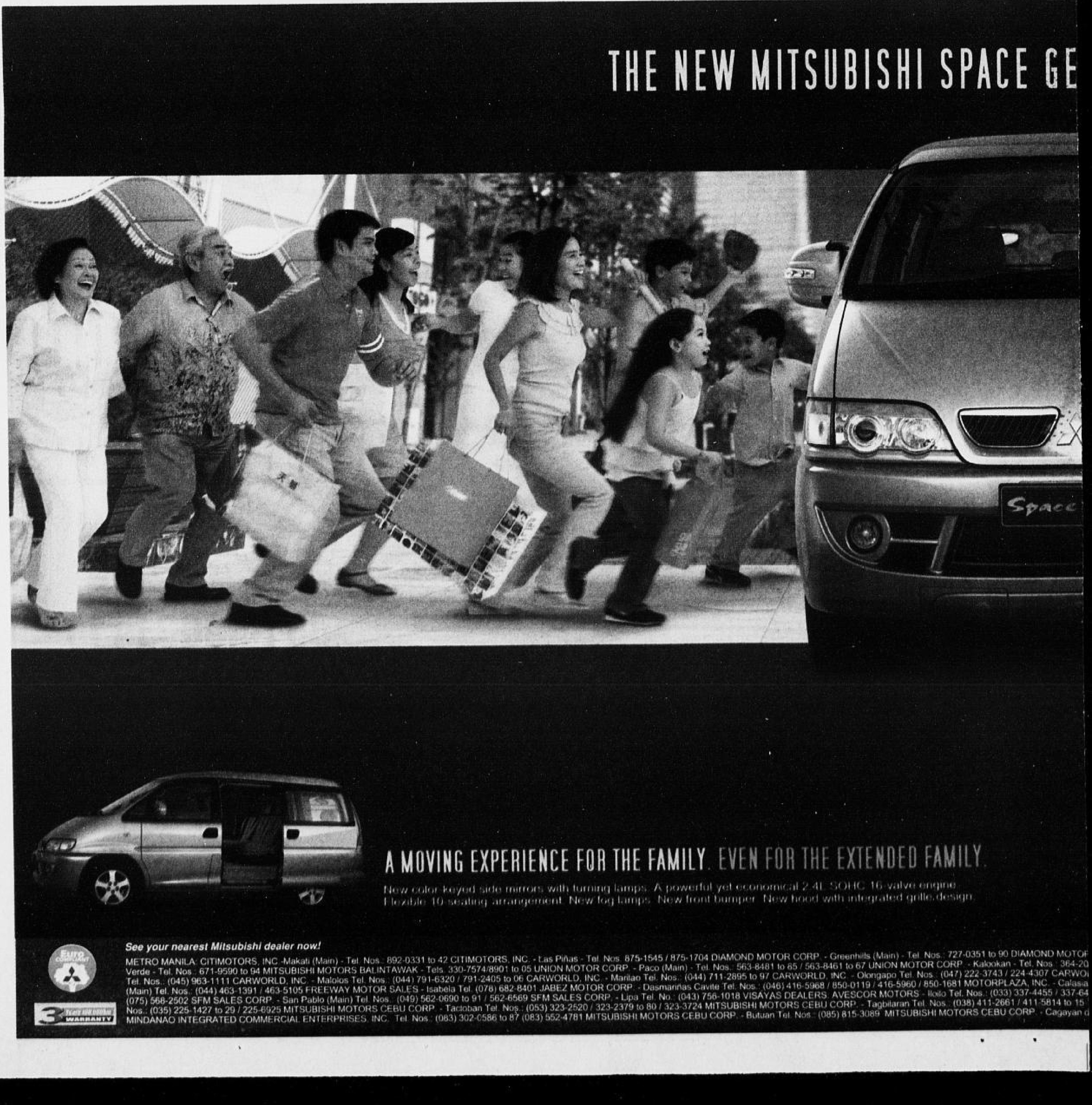
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# *Globe, ESPN forge content deal for 3G*

**By Daxim L. Lucas**

THE COUNTRY'S SECOND-largest mobile phone network operator yesterday sealed a deal with Mobile ESPN to provide sports content to its clients over their cellular phones.

Dubbed Bridge Mobile Alliance, the deal comes a few days after Globe's main rival, Smart Communications Inc., inked its own agreement with IMG sports network to provide sports content to clients over its third-generation (3G) network.

Bridge Mobile Alliance brings together seven mobile phone companies in the Asia-Pacific region which will simultaneously offer Mobile ESPN's products, especially news and video content from the upcoming 2006 World Cup in Germany.

"The Bridge Mobile Alliance has proven in this initiative the strategic competitive advantage it delivers to its member operators," Globe service creation division head Mario R. Domingo said in a statement. "ESPN is a worldwide leader in sports broadcast and Globe Telecom is enthusiastic about its inclusion to our comprehensive lineup of services."

"Globe was the first in Asia Pacific to launch 3G with HSDPA," he added. "The ESPN content will help highlight 3G's high-speed, rich media and exciting features. The Filipino sports fan will be delighted to find this offering."

The service was launched by seven of Bridge Mobile Alliance's member operators, namely Airtel (India), CSL (Hong Kong), Globe Telecom (Philippines), Maxis (Malaysia), SingTel (Singapore), Taiwan Mobile (Taiwan) and Telkomsel (Indonesia).

The company statement said that the Mobile ESPN sports content service was the first of a regional mobile content suite of services to be offered by the alliance, as part of its regional mobile service strategy.

Mobile ESPN is the mobile sports content service provided by ESPN Star Sports, Asia's No. 1 sports broadcaster and content provider.

ESPN Star Sports broadcasts the world's premier live sports and leading regional sports events to over 139 million households on ESPN and over 63 million households on Star Sports.

The company said the Mobile ESPN service would allow sports fans to follow their favorite sports teams and major sports events more closely than ever before, "all within the single touch of their mobile phone."

"With easily accessible WAP portal and SMS alert services, subscribers are able to enjoy an exciting lineup of their favorite sports content through video clips streaming and downloads, 'live' news coverage and in-depth match analysis, breaking news and top stories, anytime and anywhere through their mobile phones," the company explained. "Football fans will be delighted to know that a dedicated news section on the World Cup 2006 will be available from May 23 to July 9, 2006."

# Employers to create more jobs

## Business groups resolve to match positions with skilled workers

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**

CREATING MORE JOBS "WITH stable and decent employment relations" is the key to staying in business, employers said yesterday during the closing of their two-day 27th National Conference held at the Manila Hotel.

Organized by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, groups at the gathering resolved to improve the match between demand for jobs and the supply of skilled workers; work with the government and other sectors on creating jobs in flexible and competitive labor markets; and tap countries that import Filipino workers to help sustain the local labor pool.

Also, the employers agreed to sustain the benefits that companies provide society by promoting corporate social responsibility and compliance with labor and social standards.

Ecop said employers needed to take such steps amid "complicated changes taking place in the (local) economy due to continuing adjustments of business and industry to rapid changes and intensifying pressure" in the global economy.

The group looked at the following factors affecting their firms' survival, competitiveness and growth: liberalized domestic and foreign markets; technological innovations; global sourcing of goods and services and movements of people, including migration of professional skills and talents in response to global demand.

"There are tremendous opportunities for employers to have a stronger voice and be represented in negotiations with various bilateral and multilateral trade partners to prepare the workforce for drastic changes, including economic integration, pandemics and other disasters," Ecop said.

In particular, the employers resolved to take up the following efforts among others:

- Gain competitive advantage by ensuring adequate planning and development of the workforce with the essential skills needed in enterprises.
- Break the glass ceiling for women by ensuring equal employment opportunities, setting targets for women achievers to occupy top positions and espousing a total gender equality policy.
- Prepare effective social safety nets targeted for vulnerable workers such as the youth, women, differently abled persons, seniors, home workers, and minorities.
- Identify critical skills that would be in short supply and develop a human resource development plan to provide the pipeline for fresh talents and skills.
- Campaign for limiting the number of "special non-working days" to avoid disruption of production or operation schedules.
- Provide funds, create, test and fine-tune a "labor market signal system" that would measure which skills would be in demand, in shortage or in oversupply.

The employers likewise resolved to tap countries that host Filipino overseas workers in helping replenish domestic investments in education and training.

# Alaska to expand powdered milk line

**By Elizabeth L. Sanchez**

MILK MARKET LEADER ALASKA MILK CORP. is spending $5 million to expand its powdered milk line as it banks on further increasing its market share over the next few years.

The expansion will increase its capacity to produce powdered milk by another 2 tons an hour, from 1.5 tons an hour, at its spray drying facility in San Pedro, Laguna.

The new facility will be operational by the first quarter of next year.

Spray drying refers to a process that converts treated skim milk into powdered milk.

This year, however, will be tough for the milk products producer, with net earnings expected to contract 15 percent from P300.9 million in 2005 due to its decision to hold off price increases.

AMC president Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr. said following yesterday's stockholders' meeting that AMC would keep prices steady despite the higher cost of raw materials, which would impact on its net income.

The prices of tin plates, a major packaging material for AMC's milk products, are expected to breach the $1,000 a ton level this year, up 10 percent from about $900 a ton.

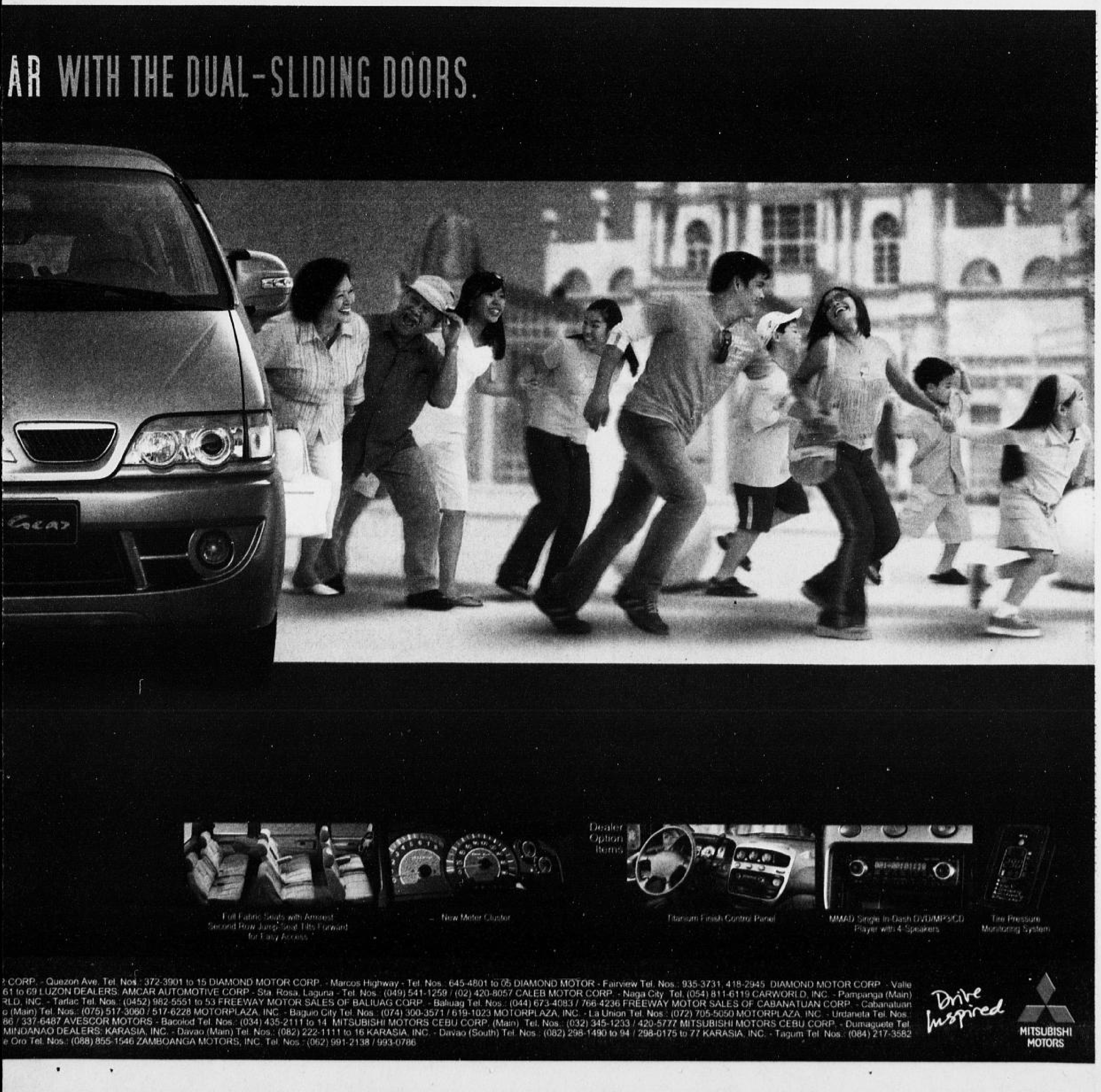
A more positive trend is the projected improvement in skim milk prices, which were expected to decline to $2,000 a metric ton by the fourth quarter this year from the current $2,150 a metric ton, Uytengsu said.

"The market is contracting as an industry but, we have been growing our market share. We believe, in the long term, that the market will not continue to contract, that there is real population growth of about 2.4 percent so that is a million more customers into the market place," Uytengsu said. "I believe that ultimately, the market will rebound as we have seen in the fourth quarter last year."

Alaska is the dominant player in the liquid milk category with a 42-percent market share in evaporated milk and a 49-percent market in condensed milk. It is the second largest brand in the powdered milk category with a 21-percent market share.

In the first quarter, net income for AMC contracted 20 percent to P74 million from P93 million in the same period last year as consumer demand continued to be affected by the increase in taxes and prices of goods and services.

Operating costs also increased due to hikes in the prices of local and imported raw and packaging materials , particularly sugar, skim milk powder and tinplates.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**ILOILO** : **June 16 & 17, 2006** (Fri & Sat), 1:00-6:00 pm, Plaza Amigo Hotel, J.M. Basa Street, Iloilo City

**CEBU** : **June 21 & 22, 2006** (Wed & Thurs), 1:00-6:00 pm, Cebu City Marriot Hotel, Cardinal Rosales Avenue, Cebu City

Registration starts at 12:00 noon.
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## LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

| Item / Description | Approved Budget | Source of Funds | Non-Refundable Fee |
|---|---|---|---|
| 654 pcs. 14K Gold Ring | P 5,803,596.00 | LBP Funds | P 1,000.00 |
| 300 units SMS Power Resetting Device | 11,550,000.00 | LBP Funds | 2,000.00 |
| 80 units 6.0 KVA Uninterruptible Power Supply | 8,800,000.00 | LBP Funds | 1,000.00 |
| 200 units DOT Matrix Printer | 6,400,000.00 | LBP Funds | 1,000.00 |
| 1 lot Two (2) Years Lease Rental of 24 units Brand New Digital Copier Machine | 3,126,000.00 | LBP Funds | 1,000.00 |
| 1 lot Blade Server | 16,000,000.00 | LBP Funds | 2,000.00 |

Bidding is on **June 14, 2006** at 1:00 PM and Bid Documents may be obtained from the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, **upon payment of the required non-refundable fee.**

**Interested suppliers are requested to attend the** Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **June 1, 2006** at the abovementioned address.

All particulars relative to **Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).**

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

**BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE**

(PDI–May 17 & 24, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Ilocos Sur
Municipality of BANTAY

OFFICE OF THE BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

May 22, 2006

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites Manufacturers/Suppliers/Distributors/Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the:

***Purchase of Computer and Reading Glasses*** ***P10,000,000.00***

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particular relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference/s, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedue of activities is listed, as follows:

| *Activities* | *Schedule* |
|---|---|
| 1. Issuance of Bid Documents | May 30, 2006 |
| 2. Pre-Bid Conference | May 31, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m. |
| 3. Opening of Bids and Bid Evaluation | June 2, 2006 @ 2:00 PM |
| 4. Place of Bid Opening | x |
| 5. Notice of Award | x |

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee (for bid documents). Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC and may obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC.

The BAC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **JONATHAN GOROSPE**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 24 & 31, 2006)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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## NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **BENZ CREATION AND NOVELTIES, INC.** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Export Producer of Home Decors** on a **Non-Pioneer** Status with capacity of **146,410 pcs per year** with project/plant site located at **Magno Compound, Capt. Tirador St., Janiuay, Iloilo City.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the abovementioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI–May 24, 2006)

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# OBITUARIES

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*- Psalm 84:2*

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on the **First Death Anniversary**

of

## ROMULO Y. ABAYA

*who joined his Creator on May 24, 2005*

Masses will be offered
on May 24, 2006, Wednesday
at the following churches:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Santuario del Sto. Cristo**<br>(Blumentritt, San Juan) | 6:00 AM; 7:30 AM<br>6:00 PM |
| **Mary the Queen Parish**<br>(Madison, Greenhills, San Juan) | 6:00 AM; 7:00 AM<br>6:00 PM |
| **Mount Carmel Shrine**<br>(New Manila, Quezon City) | 6:00 AM; 7:00 AM<br>6:00 PM |
| **St. John Bosco Parish**<br>(Arnaiz St., Makati) | 6:30 AM; 7:30 AM<br>12:15 PM; 6:00 PM |
| **Parish of San Felipe Neri**<br>(Mandaluyong City) | 6:00 AM; 7:00 AM<br>6:00 PM; 7:00 PM |
| **San Fernando de Dilao Parish**<br>(Paz St., Paco, Manila) | 6:00 AM; 5:00 PM |
| **Sto. Niño Parish**<br>(Jesus St., Pandacan, Manila) | 6:30 PM |

*"As the sparrow finds a home and the swallow*
*a nest to settle her young,*

*My home is by your altars,*
*Lord of hosts, my king and my God!"*
*- Psalm 84:4*

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# British Ambassador witnesses UK-funded NFA's e-Auction program

BRITISH AMBASSADOR PETER BECKINGHAM WITNESSED today the actual electronic auction (e-Auction) for the 200,000 bags of well-milled rice (WMR) conducted by the National Food Authority at the Food Development Center Auditorium in Taguig City.

The British government funded the enhancement of the agency's e-Auction with a grant amounting to £39,303 to purchase computer softwares and hardwares needed for the e-Auction system.

Last year, the NFA held electronic auctions in three separate locations nationwide simultaneously to enable bidders from Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao to participate in public biddings without leaving their respective provinces. The British government assisted the auction program to expand it nationwide.

NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. thanked the British government for extending the grant to the food agency. Tan said the partnership between the NFA and the British government will help millions of rice and corn farmers nationwide reap the many benefits of technology. "We assure the British government that the grant will be fully utilized to empower our farmers to market their produce via electronic auctions and to make the transaction transparent," Tan said.

Ambassador Beckingham said the British government looks forward to a deeper partnership with the NFA and the Philippine government in the coming years. "We believe in the Philippines and we believe that this endeavor will benefit, not only the NFA, but moreso the millions of farmers in the country. We are happy to be involved with this project," Beckingham said.

The NFA's e-Auctions are being held in compliance with the government's e-trading law to minimize the costs involved in the holding separate auctions in different locations nationwide and to ensure transparency in the food agency's operations.

For more information on NFA programs, the public may send their inquiries, suggestions and complaints via the Text-NFA program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

More Classified Ads on pages A10, A24, A30 & B4

# OBITUARIES

## ASUNCION SORIANO ALANDY

**of Pagsanjan, Laguna**

*Peacefully joined her Creator*
*on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at the age of 89.*

**Chong** or **Mamay**, as she was fondly called, was survived by her only child **Teresing** and son-in-law **Luis Ferrer III** (†); sisters **Pacita** and **Nena**; brother **Tollie** and sister-in-law **Edna**; grandchildren **Ony & Ann, Mia & Mike** and **Jonjon & Monette**; great grandchildren **Therese, Toby, Martin, Trina, Miggy** and **Alexie**.

Her remains lie in state at Ferrer's residence in Barangay Pinagtipunan, Gen. Trias, Cavite. Her remains will be transferred to Pagsanjan, Laguna tomorrow, May 25, 2006 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Interment will be on the same date (Thursday) at the Ala-ala Memorial Park in Pagsanjan, Laguna after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

---

**"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."**
John 11:25-26

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## LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

*Tel. Nos. Q.C.: 712-3001 • 743-6502; Mla.: 711-6931 to 35*

| NAME OF DECEASED | PLACE OF VIEWING | INTERMENT/CREMATION | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | DATE & TIME | PLACE |
| SPO2 PETRONILO MENDOZA | Chapel A-1, Q.C. | To be announced | Bo. Makinabang, Baliwag, Bulacan |
| ROGELIO CAPEDING | Chapel C12-a, Q.C. | May 27, 2006; 9:00 AM | Paz Crematory |
| DON JOSE DEL BARRIO Y INGALLA | Chapel C-14, Q.C. | May 25, 2006, after the 7:00 AM Mass | Paz Crematory |

We design **OBITUARIES** for free.

---

THE AUGUSTINIAN SISTERS
OF OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION
*Beg you to recommend to God in your prayers and sacrifices the soul of our dear*

## *Sister Fe Endunela Alpon, OSA*

***Who passed away on May 22, 2006 at the age of 60.***

**MAY SHE REST IN PEACE**

Funeral Mass will be on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at 8 a.m. at the La Consolacion Convent Chapel, 273 Santolan Road, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Interment will follow at the La Loma Cemetery immediately after the Mass.

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Our Dearly Beloved

## SIR KNIGHT SERGIO "MAC" HIDALGO MACASIEB, SR.

of Lingayen, Pangasinan and Quezon City
(Retired NAPOCOR Engineer)

*Peacefully joined our Creator on May 21, 2006 at the age of 70.*

His bereaved wife **HENEDINA (EDITH)**; children **GARY & ROSQUE, VANGIE & JET LINGAT, SERGIO JR (JING) & ALICE, NOTNOT & NELSON CASTILLO, EDWARD & NATY**; his grandhcildren; siblings **NANDY & DICK, ROLAND, LITO, BEN & VILMA** and other relatives and friends request YOUR prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is on May 26, 2006, Friday after the 9:00 a.m. Mass and will be laid to eternal rest at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.

**"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."** 2 Corinthians 5:8

# Gov't has means to raise workers' pay, says DOF

## Authorities can afford to shell out up to ₱1B this year alone

**By Michelle V. Remo**

TEVES

THE GOVERNMENT CAN AFFORD to shell out P600 million to P1 billion this year to accommodate proposals to increase salaries of public workers, according to the Department of Finance.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said it would be ideal if such proposals were to be implemented later, or until revenue-raising measures pending in Congress have been enacted into law.

But if pressed to implement a salary hike this year, Teves said, the government could allot a maximum of P1 billion.

Any amount higher than P1 billion could disrupt the government's program to reduce its budget deficit and improve its fiscal standing, he said.

The finance chief said the maximum of P1 billion could go to minimum wage earners. State workers with higher income should be given an increase in pay at a later date, as soon as the government has acquired new sources of revenue.

The fiscal incentives rationalization bill, which is pending in the Senate, is seen to address the estimated P300 billion in lost revenues a year due to the granting of various tax- and duty-free privileges.

The bill aims to lift incentives that are no longer necessary just to attract investments.

Another revenue-enhancing proposal still pending in the Senate is the overhaul of the income tax system, under which individuals would be imposed a flat tax rate of 35 percent on their income.

Teves said that while it was reasonable for workers to ask for a pay hike, the government should be able to balance their request with the need to fix its fiscal problem first before granting all requests for a wage hike.

The government is still in the process of reducing its budget deficit, which last year stood at P146.5 billion.

The DOF has set a target of reducing the deficit to P125 billion this year.

The government hopes to wipe it out by 2008.

Labor groups in the private sector have been pressing for a wage hike, citing the increasing costs of basic commodities partly brought about by skyrocketing prices of oil and the implementation of the Reformed VAT Law.

The VAT law raised the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent and expanded the coverage of the value-added tax to include previously exempted oil and electricity, among others.

Government workers, whose salaries were last raised in 2001, are also asking for adjustments in their monthly salaries.

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## *Napocor to draw ₱182-M fund to restore watersheds*

**By Abigail L. Ho**

THE ENERGY REGULATORY Commission has allowed the National Power Corp. to get P182 million from a special trust fund managed by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. to rehabilitate and manage its watersheds.

In an April 11 order, the ERC said the fund formed part of the universal charge collected every month from all electricity users.

Not only did the ERC allow Napocor to draw from the special fund, but it also gave the state firm flexibility in using this amount.

"Accordingly, Napocor is hereby directed to submit a detailed report on the disbursement of funds within 30 days from the last date of the program implementation, or when the total amount of the approved funds has been allotted and spent," the ERC order stated.

Napocor had actually sought, in three separate petitions covering 2003-2005, the disbursement of P471.3 million from the PSALM-managed special trust fund.

PSALM said, however, that only P182 million was available for disbursement.

Because of this, the state firm had to "adjust and revise" its environmental program, and identify "priority projects" so that the available amount could be maximized.

The priority projects, which were identified after much deliberation, included the updating and acquisition of a watershed database to formulate a long-term watershed rehabilitation plan, actual watershed rehabilitation, watershed protection, and research and development.

The P182 million would also cover the acquisition of tools and equipment, as well as the construction, repair and maintenance of certain infrastructure.

According to Napocor, the identification of these priority projects was done "without sacrificing the general objectives of reforestation, watershed and forest protection, community development and natural resources protection."

These priority projects would be implemented until April next year, forming part of the environmental programs under Napocor's five-year watershed management plan.

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# Philam Savings Bank set to merge with sister firm

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

PHILAM SAVINGS BANK IS SET to merge with sister company AIG Credit Card Co. as part of the Philam group's strategy to consolidate its consumer finance businesses in the country.

In a press briefing yesterday, top company officials said the merger would generate savings to boost the consolidated company's profitability, by taking advantage of Philam Savings' deposit-taking capability to reduce the cost of credit card lending.

"The savings bank will be the surviving entity when the credit card company is folded into the bank," said Joven Reyes, country manager of AIG Consumer Finance. "The merger will take effect as soon as we get the necessary approvals. Our vision is to make AIG Philam Bank one of the preferred providers of financial products and services for our target clientele."

The merger will create an entity with P9.6 billion in resources, jacking up Philam Savings' ranking among the country's largest thrift banks by one or two notches from the current 9th or 10th position.

Reyes estimated that the merger would result in a savings of about $1 million in terms of reduced funding cost, on top of other savings expected to come from higher economies of scale. Philam Savings has deposit liabilities of about P6 billion.

The infusion of AIG Credit Card's business into Philam Savings would increase the bank's total loan portfolio from P3.7 billion to P6.2 billion.

The credit card company has a customer base of 200,000 and a lower-than-industry past due ratio of 11 percent.

"I think there's more room in the market for increased credit card penetration," Reyes said, noting that there are 4.7 million credit cards issued in the country, while the potential market based on qualified households stands at about 8 to 10 million.

Philam Bank was established in 1994 with the conversion of AIG Finance into a bank. As of end-2005, the bank had eight branches, total resources of P7.4 billion and net income of P129 million. A ninth branch will be opened in the Ortigas area within the next few months.

AIG Credit Card, which was established in 1997, had total resources of P2.2 billion and a net income of P94 million.

For this year, Reyes projected that the consolidated entity would chalk up a net profit of about P170 million.

The country's biggest insurer Philamlife and AIG Consumer Finance Corp. largely own Philam Savings.

The two firms also wholly own AIG Credit Card.

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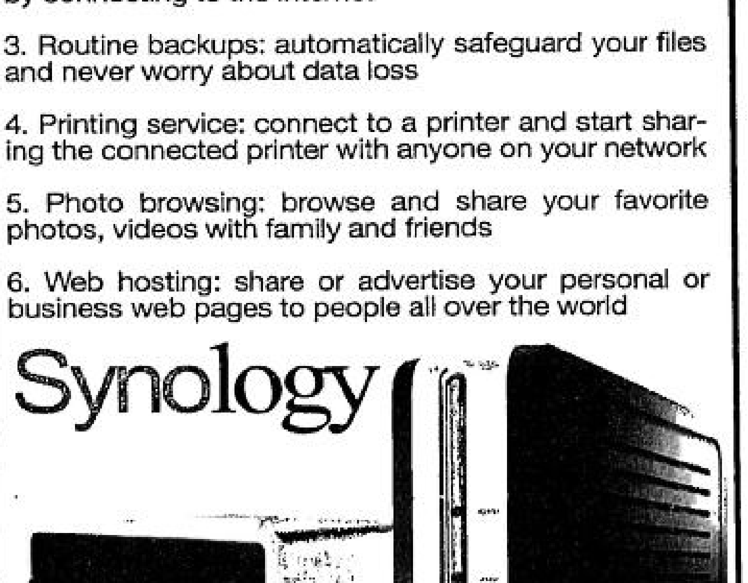

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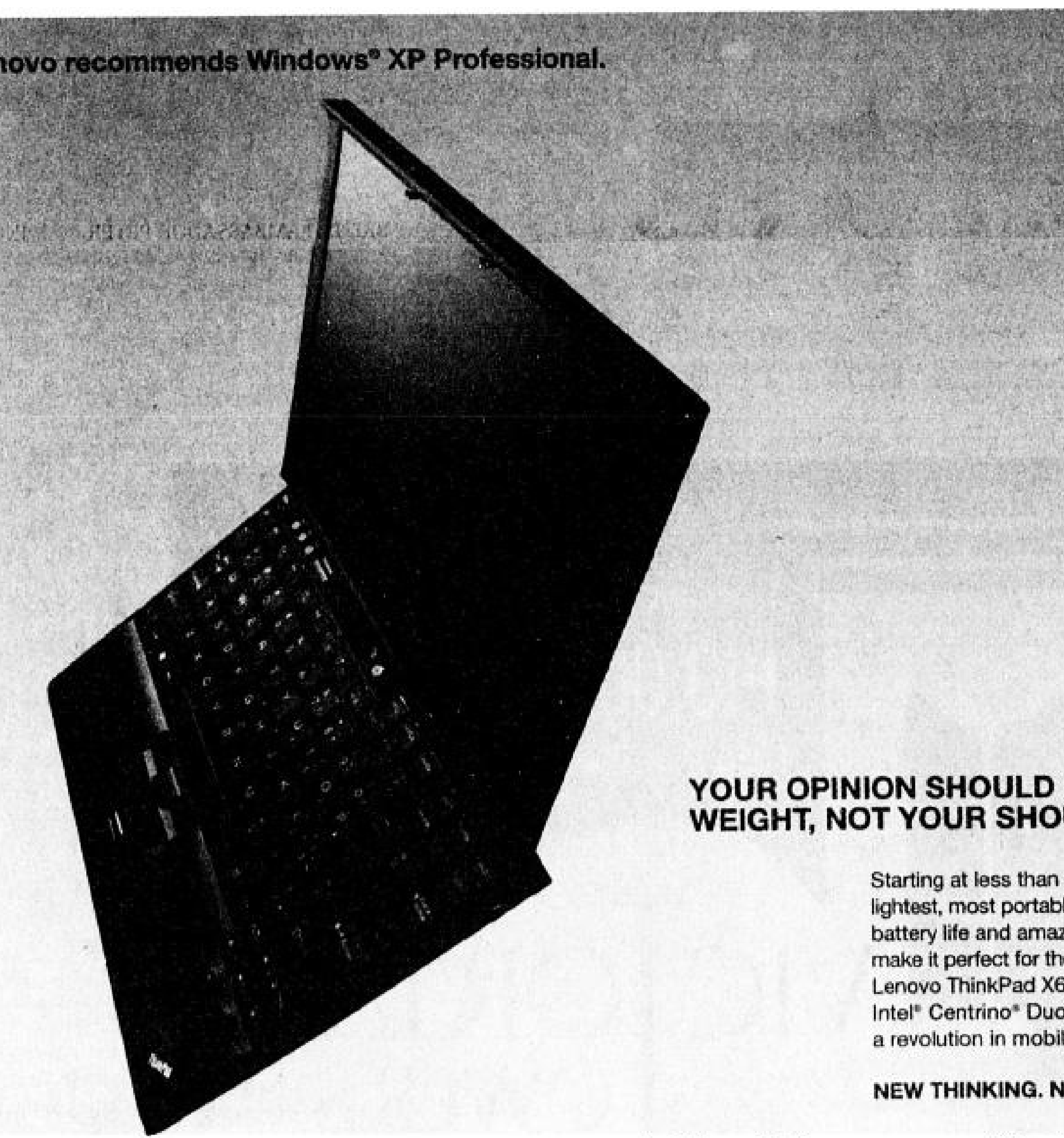

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# Senate out to repeal provision on VAT cap

## DOF yields to business groups, says it won't oppose move to rationalize tax system

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE BUSINESS SECTOR HAS GAINED AN ally in the Senate after the chamber's ways and means committee vowed to repeal the hotly contested 70-percent cap on input VAT credits.

Sen. Ralph Recto, committee chair, said the lifting of the VAT cap would be one of the provisions in a proposed bill that would seek to rationalize the income tax system.

Various business groups, including the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have been protesting the cap on input VAT credits. The groups said that the measure is unjust because it prevents corporate taxpayers from claiming the credits that are due them. They also said the VAT cap was burdensome, especially for those whose profit margins are less than 30 percent.

The VAT cap is one of the provisions of the Reformed Value-Added Tax Law. The 70-percent cap meant that the amount of input VAT credits that a company may claim for a given tax period should not exceed 70 percent of its output VAT. Any amount in excess of 70 percent can be claimed in the next tax period.

Input VAT is the amount of tax shouldered by a company every time it purchases goods or services whose prices already include the value-added tax. Output VAT is the tax on one's gross sales which is currently set at 12 percent.

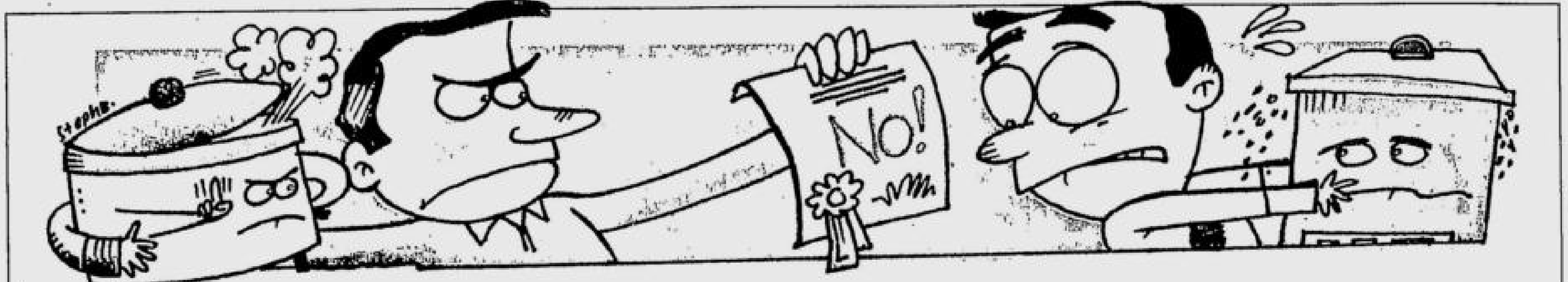
Under the VAT system, firms are allowed to deduct the input VAT from its output VAT to determine its actual tax liability. Authorities, however, earlier thought of putting a cap on the amount of input VAT credits following reports of abuse of the crediting system.

The Department of Finance, which earlier claimed that the imposition of a 70-percent VAT cap would generate P6.9 billion in additional revenues for the government a year, admitted that setting a cap on VAT credits has disrupted the input-output crediting nature of the VAT system.

According to a finance official, the DOF will no longer oppose the move to repeal the VAT cap.

The official said the DOF realized that putting a cap on VAT credits was not a prudent revenue-enhancement measure.

To address abuses, the official said, the Bureau of Internal Revenue should tighten its monitoring system rather than penalize businesses with legitimate claims.



# *Standard firms win case, retain trademark*

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY Office yesterday said it had turned down a rice dispenser manufacturer's petition to be allowed to use the brand name "Standard" following opposition from an appliance company that has been using it for years.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., IP Philippines Director General, said the agency decided in favor of Standard Appliances Corp. and its sister firm Standard Electric Manufacturing Corp., which opposed the trademark application filed by businessman Johnny Konwat.

Cristobal said that the sister firms argued that allowing Konwat to use "Standard" would limit their rights and their opportunities to use their registered trademark for new products.

In its filing, Standard Appliance said that if Konwat was allowed use the trademark, this "would deceive the public into believing that his product is owned by (us), or whose manufacture (we have) allowed."

According to the firm, the Standard firms have been using trademark since June of 1966 for products like electric fans, bread toasters, rice cookers, washing machines, flat irons, hair dryers, water heaters, television sets, radios, weighing scales, clocks, air pots, gas stoves, thermo bottles and electric pots.

Cristobal said that after a review of exhibits from the applicant and the oppositors, IP Philippines found that both trademarks contained the same word, Standard, "the spelling, meaning and pronunciation of which is exactly the same."

Further, IP Philippines hearing officer Pausi Sapak, who handled the case, found that the "opposer's mark and that of the respondent-applicant is identical in all aspects and is therefore confusingly similar."

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# Exports of bananas seen increasing by 15% this year

**By Christine A. Gaylican**

PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION IS EXPECTED to increase Philippine exports of fresh bananas this year by up to 15 percent, government and industry officials said.

An increase in demand from Japan and non-traditional markets including the Middle East of other banana varieties, aside from the best-selling Cavendish bananas, may translate to higher dollar earnings for banana exporters in 2006, Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano said.

Serrano said that the local varieties, including *señorita* and *lakatan*, are now acceptable to the Japanese market, which has cornered 60 percent of local exports of Cavendish bananas.

Last year, the country shipped a total of 891,612 tons of the Cavendish variety to Japan.

According to Francisco Lorenzo, Lapanday Foods Corp. senior vice president and general manager, product diversification could sustain the country's gains as orders from Japan for the other varieties are lining up.

He said that Philippine banana exporters cornered a larger market share of the $70-million Japanese market last year.

And there is still more room for growth this year, Lorenzo added.

He said a 15-percent growth in production is seen this year after some farmers in the province of Bukidnon shifted to planting bananas due to higher returns compared with sugar.

Philippine banana exports rose by 11 percent in 2005 to about 1.9 million metric tons compared with the 1.71 million metric tons delivered during the same period in 2004, according to the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA).

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# IMF urges RP banks to go easy on foreign currency bonds

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

THE LARGE EXPOSURE OF LOCAL BANKS to the Republic of the Philippines' foreign currency bonds, or ROPs, has drawn the concern of the International Monetary Fund, which is now urging the banks to diversify to reduce their vulnerability and help spur investment growth in the country.

Domestic banks are estimated to hold over 80 percent of locally held external bonds, rising from about 70 percent in 1999, according to a paper released by the IMF staff ahead of the Philippine review this June.

"The forces behind increased bank holdings of ROPs deserve some scrutiny," the paper said. "There is also a need for vigilance from the authorities to ensure that an investment recovery is not hampered by a slowness on the part of banks to move away from these bonds."

The increasing domestic ownership of foreign currency bonds issued by the government had somehow reduced the volatility of ROPs over the years, the study noted. But the same exposure could cause potential balance sheet vulnerabilities to the investing banks and financial institutions.

"Given the presence of home bias, a pattern of repeated adverse shocks is likely to create a sustained demand for ROPs among asset managers," the study said.

Also, the IMF said banks and pension funds must "diversify their holdings away from government paper in order to reduce potential balance sheet vulnerabilities."

The study warned that trading dynamics may change in the period ahead and that any factor causing the behavior of banks or depositors to change—such as a strong investment-led domestic recovery, a preference shift by domestic depositors away from dollars, or a change in the assessment of default risk by financial institutions—could be a catalyst for change.

Citing data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the IMF said domestic investors purchased over $3 billion of externally floated Philippine debt, or close to a fifth of the entire stock of ROPs, from external investors in the secondary market alone.

As of June 2005, the IMF study noted there were some $28 billion of outstanding Philippine foreign bonds, of which $19 billion was owed by the national government.

Bond holders were estimated to hold over 30 percent of the external debt and close to 40 percent of the public sector's external debt. Of the $28 billion in bonds, some $10 billion was held by domestic residents, largely consisting of local banks (estimated at 81 percent) and insurance companies and pension funds (14 percent).

# DA seeks ₱600-M grant from Japan to support rice production program

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY Council (NAFC), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, is seeking a P600-million grant from the Japanese Government to support the country's rice production program.

DA officials said that the grant they sought would come from the Japanese government's Increase in Food Production Program—also known as KR2—for developing countries.

Part of it may be a commodity grant in the form of fertilizers, NAFC executive director Bernie Fondevilla said.

Fondevilla earlier said that the Philippine government has tapped some P200 million from the KR2 program to promote the use of composting to create organic fertilizers in local farm areas.

For two years, the country was stricken off the list of beneficiaries and did not receive agricultural commodities or farm-related inputs such as fertilizers, agricultural chemicals and agricultural machinery from Japan.

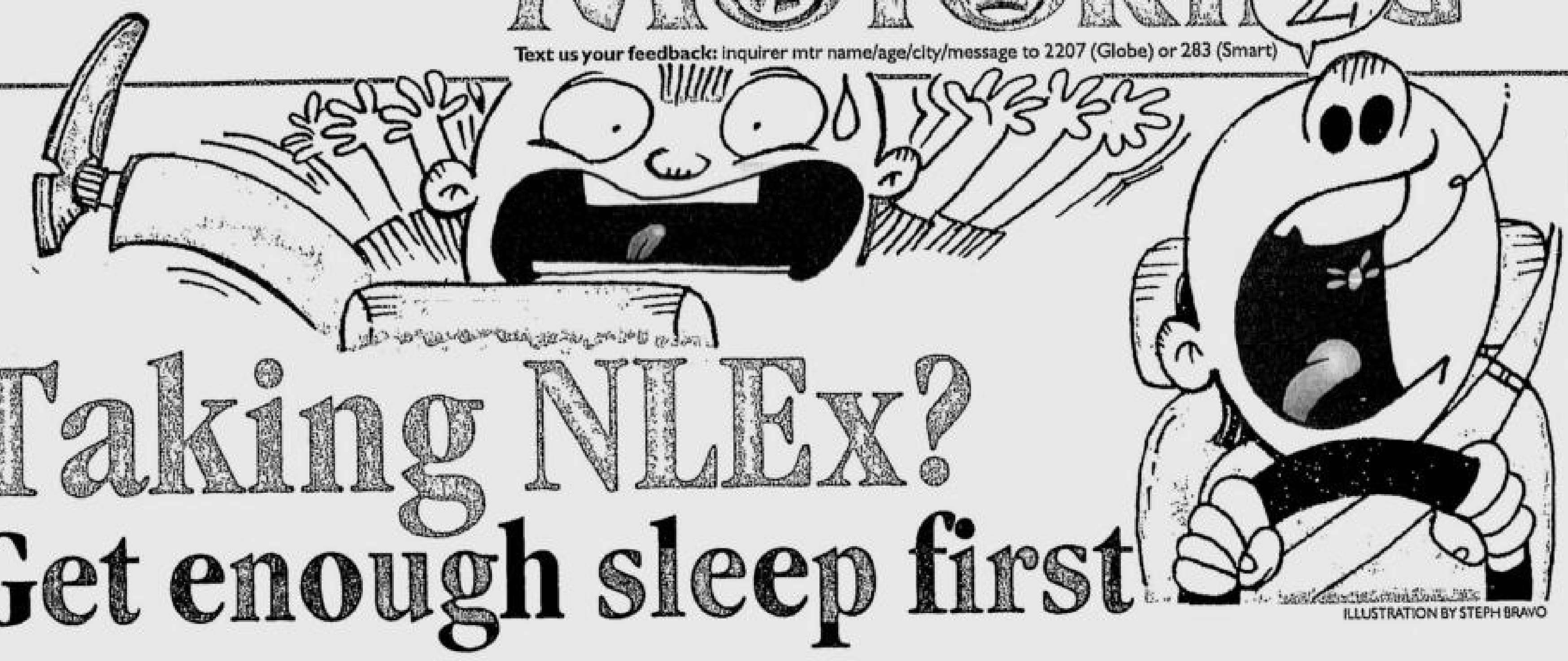
Philippine Agriculture attache Joseph Sison explained that the Japanese were quite disappointed with the Philippine government's decision to use the proceeds of the KR2 as budgetary support, and not for agriculture projects.

He said the Philippine Agricultural office in Japan has appealed its case to the Japanese Parliament.

"We have reemphasized to them that such a move will actually aggravate hunger in our country as our rice farmers will now have no access to cheap sources of fertilizers," Sison said.

He added that the Philippine government would also like to assure the Japanese that the KR2 proceeds would be used strictly for agriculture modernization and other related projects.

*Christine A. Gaylican*



# Taking NLEx?
# Get enough sleep first

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

> Those drivers who practice road safety are the ones who can bring in more profit for the company because they will have longer staying power. They actually save companies millions of pesos from damaged properties and hospital expenses

**By Tessa R. Salazar**

YOU MAY BE THE WORLD'S most skillful driver, but if you get behind the wheel drowsy, then you're worse than the worst of them.

And what's worse than drowsy driving? Doing it on one of the country's "speediest" expressways—at the North Luzon Expressway, where driving has become considerably "smoother" and technically easier that coasting along at 80 to 100 kilometer per hour (kph) for extended periods can literally lull you to sleep. The NLE publication recently revealed that drowsy driving ("driving under the influence of sleep"), driving fatigued or DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol and other substances) is the fourth leading cause of road accidents at the NLE.

Benjie A. Suzara, NLExpress editor, revealed to the INQUIRER that there were 57 reported cases of accidents caused by driver fatigue or sleepiness during February to December 2005. This figure came in fourth after reckless driving (600 cases), tire failure (246 cases) and brake failure (120 cases) as the top three cases of accidents at the NLE.

Even at the more "technically challenging" South Luzon Expressway, drowsy driving has forced authorities to sit up and pay attention. On the elevated Skyway ramp of the SLE, there were 48 reported accidents caused by fatigue or sleepiness in 2005. This was revealed by Daisy Jacobo, chief of the Land Transportation Office's traffic safety division.

## Top 3 causes of accidents

At the national level, the top three causes of accidents in 2005 as indicated in the Philippine National Police's Traffic Management Group were driver error (3,301 cases in 2005 versus 4,319 in 2004); overspeeding (1,624 in 2005 versus 1,505 in 2004); and mechanical defects (1,434 in 2005 versus 2,087 in 2004).

In total, the TMG reported 11,425 cases in 2005, a 19.55 percent decrease from the 14,202 cases in 2004.

Though drowsy driving was not expressly indicated as one of the causes in the accident report, Jacobo said that fatigue or sleepiness may have been included in the national data under driver error.

## Lack of sleep

The NLE data revealed that majority of public utility vehicle drivers weren't able to get enough hours of sleep (8.5 hours according to scientific studies) for various reasons.

Some drivers indicated trip quotas forced them to drive more than they should. Others, though, insisted that even if they lacked sleep, they could still drive.

"If our motivation is profit, it would be to our advantage if we study these (accident) figures so that it can guide us in our work. In the long run, those drivers who practice road safety are the ones who can bring in more profit for the company because they will have longer staying power," Jacobo said.

And these drivers who practice road safety actually save companies millions of pesos from damaged properties and hospital expenses, she added.

NLE patrols say they are on the constant lookout for sleepy drivers. If they spot one (tell-tale indicators are the vehicle veering from its lane and/or running unusually slow) they would pull the driver over to a safe spot where the driver could catch some sleep.

Jacobo urges drivers to also be mindful of the medicines they are taking before taking the wheel. "Cold tablets or cough syrups can have a soporific effect. If you are taking these, have somebody drive for you."

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | 12 | 18 | 24 | 36 | 48 | 60 |  |
| Aveo 1.5 M/T | 570.000 | 59.000 | 45.495 | 31.175 | 24.175 | 17 204 | 13.782 | 12 009 | 6,831 |
| Aveo 1.5 A/T | 610 000 | 69 000 | 48 166 | 33 005 | 25 595 | 18 214 | 14 592 | 12 715 | 7 310 |
| Aveo Special Ed. 1.6 M/T | 635.000 | 69.000 | 50.392 | 34.530 | 26.777 | 19.056 | 15.266 | 13.302 | 7.610 |
| Aveo Special Ed. 1.6 A/T | 675.000 | 79.000 | 53.062 | 36.361 | 28.196 | 20.066 | 16.075 | 14.007 | 8.089 |
| Optra 1.6 L A/T | 713 000 | 89 000 | 55.555 | 38 069 | 29.521 | 21 009 | 16.830 | 14.665 | 8.644 |
| Optra 1.6 LS M/T | 738 000 | 89.000 | 57 781 | 39.594 | 30 704 | 21 850 | 17.504 | 15 263 | 8.844 |
| Optra 1.6 LS A/T | 783 000 | 89 000 | 61 787 | 42 339 | 32 833 | 23 366 | 18 718 | 16 310 | 9 383 |
| Optra Special Ed. 1.6 A/T | 795,000 | 99.000 | 61,965 | 42,461 | 32,927 | 23,433 | 18,772 | 16,367 | 9,527 |
| Optra Wagon 1.6 M/T | 808,000 | 99.000 | 63,123 | 43,254 | 33,542 | 23,871 | 19,123 | 16,663 | 9,653 |
| Optra Wagon 1.6 A/T | 853,000 | 99,000 | 67,129 | 46,000 | 35,671 | 25,386 | 20,336 | 17,720 | 10,222 |

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# Road deaths

## FULL TANK

*Al Mendoza*

CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?

More than 800 people die daily of road traffic accidents in the Western Pacific region.

That is not to include the injured, or the maimed for life.

The Western Pacific region covers 48 countries and territories including Australia, the Pacific Island countries, Japan, Korea, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

This bizarre finding was bared only a few days ago by the World Health Organization (WHO) in a meeting with national experts in Manila to discuss future directions for injury and accident prevention programs.

* * *

**You may not also believe it but the safest mode of travel is by air.**

**Traveling by land is the most dangerous as road accidents occur almost every minute worldwide.**

**Imagine the catastrophic proportions if air accidents happen every minute worldwide?**

**Or mishaps happening at sea worldwide every minute?**

**The sinking of the Titanic will merely become a stat in everyday living.**

* * *

Defensive driving has always been my defense against road accidents. Thank God, it's been working all these years.

If we say defensive driving, you drive carefully in the sense that:

- You don't overtake recklessly as to take risks when passing another vehicle.
- You don't drive fast in a crowded road.
- You use your brake and not your horn all of the time (OK, if really necessary, honk but only to warn and not irritate).
- You keep your cool if a jeepney/bus/taxi driver—or even a driver of a private vehicle for that matter—cuts your path.
- You consider all drivers around you idiots.

* * *

**Well, wait a minute, what about cops, or MMDA men, who pin you down with a traffic violation but in reality are only out to fleece you?**

**Keep your cool.**

**First, ask the officer what your violation is.**

**Of course, he will ask you to show your driver's license.**

**You tell him right off, yes, you will show him your license but you will not hand it to him.**

**Showing your license and surrendering it to him are two different things.**

**As far as I know, the law does not require you to surrender your license. It says you show proof that you are driving with a license that is valid—meaning it is not an expired license.**

**In short, be smart. Never allow yourself to be outsmarted by an apprehending traffic enforcer. For all you know, you are a lot wiser than him.**

**If you assert your right, he'll think twice.**

* * *

Accidents happen and, most of the time, they happen within three seconds.

It can really be avoided—minimize it, really—if you are alert, aware of the rules on the road, and cautious of all the drivers around you.

I've said this before but I'll say it again. My ABC in driving means A as in Avoid, B as in Brake and C as in Cool.

"Avoid" vehicles as much as possible by "Braking" and being "Cool" at all times.

Ours is a country with driving habits that isn't the envy of many countries around the world.

But I dare you to be different. Adopt my ABC of driving and contribute to WHO's campaign for road safety in the Pacific region.

Always, a good habit is worth keeping.

* * *

**QUOTE ME. In a capsule I describe former Toyota hot shot Ariel de Jesus, the Che Guevarra of our motoring industry, this way: When something's become too good to be true, it's time to quit.**

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net.

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# Could, would, should

## MY DRIFT

*Andre Palma*

WE LIVE IN A SMALL BUT SURVIVING automotive market, nowhere near where we'd like to be but far from what our imaginations will label as catastrophic. Some of us should still remember the days when new vehicle releases were so rare that the average buyer never really had a choice of what to put in his or her home garage. These days, we are spoiled with the choices available in the showroom floors but that does not mean all we'll ever need is already available here and now.

Ford seems like they have their bases covered but the Blue Oval lineup is sorely missing a small, fun and economical runabout. Not that they'd admit it though.

### Market segment

This is a market segment filled, very capably in other markets, by the exciting Ford Fiesta model. Almost a micromachine version of the current Focus, this super-mini can be had with anything from a 1250 cc, four-pot gas burner, a 1.4-liter turbo diesel and the insane 148-bhp, 2.0-liter engine of the scorching hot, sub-8 second to 100-km/h, ST version.

Costs and quality of fuel may be the issue why another manufacturer cannot expand further an already solid lineup. BMW admittedly makes some of the best driving platforms available in the Philippines today. Divisive Chris Bangle styling and premium pricing aside, it would be very hard to find fault with the current crop of Bimmers, especially if the road twists and turns and you find yourself fortunate to have some iteration of the in-line six engines that the Munich-based manufacturer purveys.

The real hidden talent in the BMW retail stable is the availability, in other markets, of their hard-hitting sporting diesel engines. These razor sharp common-rail, direct injection, variable nozzle turbo diesels raise the bar for other manufacturers wishing to go the way of the torque-laden nature of this second line fuel.

### Petite performer

The petite performer that is the 1 Series is made even more able by the availability of a 2.0-liter turbo-diesel model. This version of BMW's rear-wheel-drive hatchback delivers sub-8 second time slips to 100 kilometer per hour (kph) with a 163 bhp, 232 ft lb of torque via a six-speed manual gear change. This engine also graces the 3 Series and delivers about the same performance, one of practicality with punch—under 8 seconds to 100 kph with an estimated 25 percent fuel efficiency over the gasoline 320i.

Then there is the 530d, already with impressive torque numbers, and its bigger brother, the diesel twin turbo 535d. Both sport 3.0-liter common rail engines, with the twin-slug version doing the print to 100 kph in only six and a half seconds, due in large part to a claimed factory performance of 272 bhp and 413 ft lb of pull. While power is only relatively substantial, the torque figures of the 535d are higher than some 5.0-liter V10 super car engines in the market.

### Argument

The argument for diesel also spills over into the case of Toyota. While already commonplace in the IMV trio of the Innova, Fortuner and the Hilux, the same D-4D technology is found across pretty much of the product line in other markets. Just how far does this common rail, direct injection phenomena penetrate into the Toyota lineup. Hmmm, let's see.

The Aygo city car venture with Citroen and Peugeot has a diesel, albeit not a D-4D unit but one from the French manufacturers. The new Yaris /Vitz /Echo model comes with a 1.4-liter D-4D unit. The Corolla can be had with three such engines, 1.4-liter, 2.0-liter and 2.2-liter. Two-liter D-4D units can be had with the RAV4 and the Previa MPV. While the Philippine market is still not probably keen on seeing diesels in anything other than a van or jeep, the trickle down of this phenomenon to compacts and sedans may take a little longer.

There are cars out in the world market that seem like perfect shoe-ins for any of the many motoring needs of the Filipino. Some will say that there's no point in this exercise; that the planners of the automotive industry have weeded out the superfluous, leaving us the best lineups that their respective manufacturers can offer. All knowing and expert as these people probably are, there are a few cars that would make quite a few motoring lives more interesting—an end in itself worth pursuing.

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## MOTORSCOPE

### Toyota medical mission

TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION RECENTLY HELD ITS MEDICAL and dental outreach program dubbed "Toyota: Gabay Sa [illegible] Kalusugan" held recently at the San Agustin Elementary School in Barangay Moonwalk, Parañaque City.

Close to 2,000 patients were treated during the whole-day medical activity that included services such as general medicine, pediatrics, dental, dermatology, OB-gyne and surgery.

To date, Toyota has treated over 78,000 patients through its 36 medical and dental outreach programs. These regular medical missions are an integral part of Toyota's four-pronged social development program on environmental preservation, education, health and community services.

### Official road safety advocate

FEDEX EXPRESS (FEDEX), A SUBSIDIARY OF FEDEX CORP. AND THE world's largest express transportation company is the official road safety advocate at the 2nd Philippine Car of the Year Awards.

The awards, held by the Car Awards Group Inc. rates motor vehicles that were introduced or were available in the local market from Oct. 1, 2004 to Dec. 31, 2005. The ratings are based on safety, comfort, convenience, esthetic considerations and "seat-of-the-pants" feel during regular driving modes.

"FedEx believes that the Car of the Year Awards (Coty) is an important way to ensure that the vehicles on the roads today are meeting quality standards of safety and performance," said Clifton Chua, FedEx managing director for the Philippines, Thailand and Indochina.

### Goodyear reaffirms excellence

HIGH PERFORMANCE TIRES, A SPECIALLY TUNED EURO CAR, GLAMOROUS models and a whole line of exciting activities were the order of the day as Goodyear headlined this year's Trans Sport Show, the biggest and longest-running after-market auto show in the Philippines.

For its creativity, out-of-the-box design, and kaleidoscope of activities offered, the Goodyear Pit Stop was named best booth of the five-day affair. Event organizers commended the leading tire company for mounting a booth comparable to those seen in international auto shows.

At the center of the event is an interactive presentation of the company's products, including the award-winning Goodyear Eagle F1 tires.

Featured in the company booth was a late model BMW 1-Series Sports Hatch, dressed up with special Breyton body kits to enhance the vehicle's aerodynamics and overall aesthetic value. The car also sported a creative decal execution of Goodyear Eagle F1's V-TRED pattern, a unique footprint of the award-winning tire. To complete the look, designers mounted massive 19-inch Goodyear Eagle F1 tires, which were the biggest-sized tires installed in any compact car seen at the Trans Sport Show.

As an added treat, Goodyear also gave consumers an opportunity to own Eagle F1, Fortera and Wrangler tires by offering special discounts during the entire duration of the Trans Sport Show.

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# Sorento CRDi: Kia's top of the line SUV

THE NEW KIA SORENTO CRDi DIESEL, THE only 4x4 awarded the maximum "5 Star" rating in the UK's annual JD Power and Associates' customer satisfaction index survey, is out to assert its presence in the Philippines' mid-size sport utility vehicle (SUV) market.

Produced by the Korean carmaker made famous by its compact cars Picanto and Rio that were runaway bestsellers in Europe and the Americas in 2004, the Sorento offers a wise option for buyers who prefer a relatively bigger vehicle that doesn't have the menacing presence of massive SUVs.

### Best-looking SUV

Felix J. Mabilog Jr., chief operating officer of Columbian Autocar Corp., manufacturer and distributor of Kia in the Philippines describes the Sorento as "pound for pound, the best-looking SUV in the market today." He said the Sorento approaches its performance tasks with power that overwhelms the roughest terrain, but glides over paved roads in serene smoothness. It reflects the relentless drive of Kia to achieve its goal of global prominence through advanced engineering and design.

At the heart of the 4,567 millimeter long, 1,863 mm wide and 1,740 mm height sleek exterior is a Common Rail Direct Injection (CRDI) engine with turbo charger intercooler. It has an accelerating power off the starting block and solid overtaking power provided by an engine that pumps out a maximum power of 140ps at 3,800 rpm and a hefty 32.0 kg-rpm torque at 2,000 rpm. A double wishbone, coil spring with strut damper in front, along with a five-ring, coil spring damper on the rear, keep the bounce smooth and easy.

"With this engine configuration, any road condition for the Sorento is a stroll in the park," Mabilog says proudly. "Besides, in Kia, vehicles customers get excellent value for their money, metal for metal. They get to enjoy all these qualities and conveniences without feeling a dent in their pockets," he adds.

### Sleek interior

Matching the Sorento's power and performance is a sleek interior that compares with any SUV in the market today. The gauges and other controls are easy to locate and clearly marked. It has comfortable, supportive front seats with eight-way power drive seat. It has ample head and legroom for above-average size adults. Step-in height is reasonable for an SUV while wide doors reveal roomy, comfortable seating for rear passengers.

Features like leather seats, electrically heated rear window, power side mirrors and windows, CD audio system with six speakers, front-row cupholders and tilt adjustable steering wheel are standard.

Kia is acknowledged as one of the most improved brands in reliability studies conducted very recently. It offers world-class quality and value and its cars are winning more and more awards for quality and safety.

The Sorento's powerfully built 225/75 R16 steel-belted tires on alloy wheels add to the brawny look which comes in clear white, silver, radiant red and ebony black.

SORENTO

---

# The SUV with the driving character of a mid-size sedan

WITH ITS SEGMENT-LEADING STANDARD safety technologies, all-new unibody SUV platform, bold new styling, a choice of fuel-efficient V6 powertrains and Hyundai's first SUV third-row seat, the Santa Fe becomes a "must-drive" for consumers shopping in the crossover segment.

As the first production vehicle designed at Hyundai's design center in Irvine, California, the Santa Fe is targeted to meet consumers' demand for safety, style, sophistication and performance. Before designing it, however, Hyundai engineers benchmarked the world's leading unibody SUVs, including the Lexus RX, Acura MDX and Volvo XC90. The result is a more exciting and upscale Santa Fe that combines the best attributes of SUVs with the driving character of a mid-size sedan.

Hyundai packed the all-new Santa Fe with the industry's most effective safety technologies, including Electronic Stability Control (ESC), anti-whiplash active head restraints and airbags. Santa Fe is expected to earn the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) top five-star crash test rating.

The standard 2.7-liter V6 is upgraded for 2007 Santa Fe and now includes Variable Valve Timing and a Variable Intake System to produce more than 180 horsepower and 180 lb-ft of torque (preliminary estimates). This new 2.7-liter V6 produces more horsepower and torque than its predecessor, with improved fuel economy. Santa Fe's powertrain is expected to meet the stringent Ulev emissions requirements.

The 2.7-liter V6 comes with a standard five-speed manual transmission and is available with an optional four-speed automatic. Meanwhile, Santa Fe's electronically controlled all-wheel-drive system automatically routes power to the wheels offering the best traction. A new driver-selectable AWD lock provides a fixed 50/50 torque split between front and rear wheels, which can improve traction in certain conditions.

### Segment-leading safety

The all-new 2007 Santa Fe continues Hyundai's leadership in standardizing the industry's most effective safety technologies. Santa Fe trim levels come standard with Electronic Stability Control (ESC), one of the industry's most effective life-saving technologies. ESC compares the driver's intended course with the vehicle's actual response. ESC then brakes individual front or rear wheels and/or reduces engine power as needed in certain driving circumstances to help correct understeer or oversteer. NHTSA studies show SUVs equipped with ESC experience 63 percent fewer fatalities in single-vehicle crashes. Santa Fe joins Tucson, Sonata, Azera and Entourage as vehicles in Hyundai's growing lineup with standard Electronic Stability Control—a commitment to this sophisticated and effective automotive safety technology that is unmatched by any other nonluxury automotive brand.

Front and rear disc brakes are standard and are coupled with a four-channel Antilock Braking System (ABS) that includes Electronic Brake force Distribution (EBD) to optimize brake performance even with differing vehicle loading.

All seating positions feature three-point seatbelts and adjustable head restraints. Front seat active head restraints help prevent whiplash by automatically reducing the space between a front occupant's head and the head restraint during a rear collision. Santa Fe also features a standard tire pressure monitoring system.

### Bold design

With dramatic new styling that is assertive, refined and confident, the all-new Santa Fe exterior showcases the evolving face of the Hyundai brand. At 184.1 inches long, the new Santa Fe is about seven inches longer than its predecessor, one inch wider and almost two inches taller. Its 2.9-inch wider track—wider than Toyota Highlander or Ford Explore—provides a strong stance, improved handling and increased interior room.

The 2007 Santa Fe shares an assertive front grille, confident sculptured lines and finely detailed headlights with Hyundai's HCD9 Talus concept, which was also introduced at the 2006 Naias. For a more aggressive appearance, Santa Fe SE and Limited models come with 18-inch alloy wheels. Sleeker styling makes 2007 Santa Fe more aerodynamic, improving its drag coefficient. A roof rack with integrated cross rails helps define its clean side profile, while adding functionality.

### Efficient interior

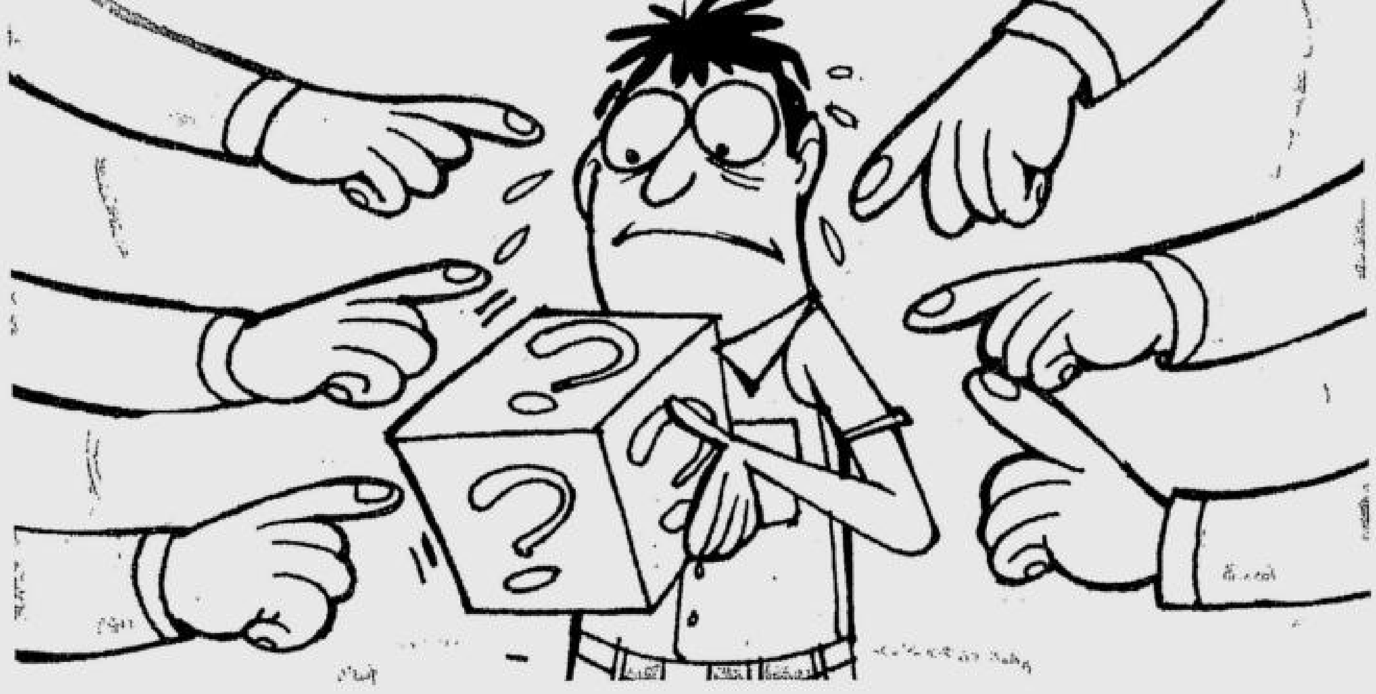
The all-new 2007 Santa Fe is one of the most package-efficient crossover SUVs on the market. Hyundai accomplished this by developing an all-new platform that avoids the compromises inherent in typical mid-size car/SUV platform sharing.

Santa Fe is Hyundai's first SUV with optional seven-passenger seating. Since 40 percent of all SUV customers want a third-row seat, this will significantly broaden Santa Fe's appeal. The third-row seat is split 50/50 and can be folded flat like the 60/40-split second-row seat. Total cargo volume is a cavernous 79.4 cubic feet, with plenty of storage for items of different sizes.

Available dual-zone climate controls for driver and front seat passenger bring a touch of luxury to the Santa Fe. Second- and third-row passengers will enjoy a new level of comfort, thanks to a rear fan switch, B-pillar mounted adjustable vents and dual rear heating ducts.

The all-new Hyundai Santa Fe is now available in the Philippines through Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) dealerships nationwide.

# Who's afraid of biofuels?



## ON THE ROAD

*Aida Sevilla-Mendoza*

DON'T BLAME US CONSUMERS IF WE are. Ever since a bill mandating the use of ethanol-blended gasoline was approved by the House of Representatives last November, we have been subjected to a confusing information barrage from oil companies, car manufacturers, nongovernment organizations and the Department of Energy (DoE) about the benefits and risks of using fossil fuels blended with sugar-derived ethanol or coconut methyl ester (CME).

Granted that the mandatory use of biofuels sourced from indigenous crops will save the country hundreds of millions in foreign exchange annually, clean up the air, increase the mileage of motor vehicles, lift the earnings of poor sugar and coconut farmers and speed up the country's drive toward energy independence ... but what about the consumer? Who will be held responsible if something goes wrong in your car because of the long-term use of biofuels?

### Null and void

Certainly not the car manufacturer or car dealer. As early as two years ago, the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) expressed concern about how ethanol-blended gasoline can affect fuel system components due to ethanol's affinity to water. Campi warned that the warranty of a motor vehicle will become null and void if any problem is traced to the use of fuel or an additive not approved by the car manufacturer. The manufacturer should not be held liable for what the consumer has put in the vehicle, Campi says.

So now, while Campi declares that it supports immediately, without the retrofitting of cars, the proposed 1 percent blend of CME in diesel if the biodiesel complies with the Philippine National Standard incorporating the World Wide Fuel Charter's specs, Campi also stresses that it is not endorsing ethanol.

Furthermore, Campi sticks to its original position that the use of biofuels should be voluntary, not mandatory. Campi also made it clear that while it endorses a 1 . percent biodiesel blend, any increase in the blend ratio will be subject to discussions with the Philippine Biofuels Board that will be created when the consolidated Biofuels Act is finally approved by the Senate.

### Not liable

Like Campi, the big oil companies don't want to be blamed should a car malfunction due to the use of biofuel. Among the oil majors, Caltex has been the most vocal against the Biofuels Act. Caltex has emphasized that oil companies or retailers should not be held liable for any damage or any other form of loss to the vehicle or its parts on account of their compliance with the biofuels mandate.

Last December, Caltex (sometimes called Chevron) told Congress in a position paper that it could not support legislation mandating the sale and use of preblended coco-biodiesel. Caltex explained that no tests have been conducted on the long-term effects of CME-blended diesel on oil companies' storage tanks and on motor vehicles' fuel injectors. Selling a relatively untested product like CME may unduly expose the company and its retailers to consumer complaints and lawsuits, Caltex said.

### Disputed

Caltex's stand was disputed by The Philippine Biodesel Association (TPBA) whose convenor, Cris Michelena, claimed that CME has been the main ingredient of aviation lubricants for many years, proving that its technical excellence has long been tried, tested and used.

The issues presented by Caltex, TPBA said, are those associated with rapeseed and soybean biodiesels which are widely used in North America and Europe and which are highly unsaturated. These problems don't exist with CME since CME is highly saturated (91 percent) and thus stable against oxidation and the resulting bacterial growth and corrosion.

### Minor

Notice that only the minor players are into biofuels on a commercial scale: Flying V sells 1 percent CME-preblended diesel at some of its service stations while all Seaoil outlets carry E10 (10 percent ethanol preblended gasoline). The ethanol is imported from Brazil since there are no ethanol-producing plants in this country yet.

At least Petron, which is partly owned by the government, has signed a contract to supply coco-biodiesel to the state-run National Power Corp. to fuel its fleet of vehicles. However, the contract stipulates that the buyer, not the supplier, will shoulder the risks of using coco-biodiesel. This will not exactly reassure prospective biodiesel customers.

The good news is that this week, when the Senate discusses Senate Bill 226, which consolidates various bills on the use of biofuels, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel plans to add provisions to protect consumers. Admitting that various issues on the mandatory use of biofuels remain unresolved, Pimentel said that consumer choice and warranties should be embodied in SB 226.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Heart attack: God's revenge for eating his animal friends.

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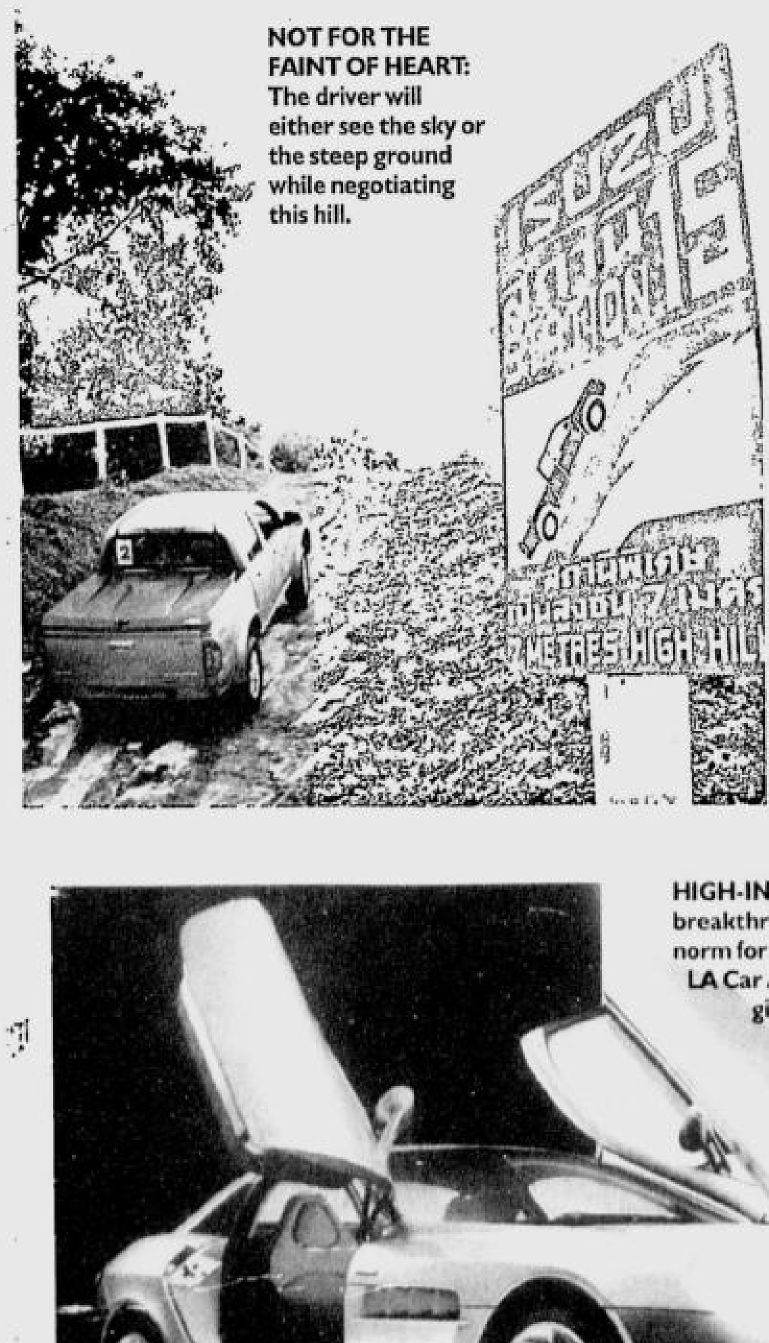
# Tested to face the roughest terrain

CAREFUL maneuvering is what you do you won't get stuck in the mud.



NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART: The driver will either see the sky or the steep ground while negotiating this hill.

From page B2-4

land and one of the most trusted pickups elsewhere in the world.

### National sensation

It was in May 2002 when the Isuzu D-Max was introduced in Thailand and immediately became a national sensation: the pickup sold over 100,000 units in this country alone during its first 10 days on the market and garnered a commanding 40 percent share of the Thai pickup truck market that year.

In fact, Tri-Petch Isuzu reported that the D-Max still dominates the kingdom's vehicle market with a 37 percent share (despite the introduction of newer models from rival automakers) and for the past three years has made a record sale of 500,000 units.

Here in the Philippines, the D-Max also enjoyed similar accomplishments as it topped all pickups available locally with 2,440 sold units last year (translating to a commanding 35.2 percent share of the market) and marking for the second consecutive year that the D-Max has been the country's best-selling pickup since its launch in November 2003.

### Count on the D-Max

This record-breaking background somehow made our group to count on the D-Max as we go through the challenging Isuzu 4WD Land stations unscathed.

One of the toughest would include the seven-meter-high hill, the deep ditch route and mud crossing where the driver should maintain a steady speed as well as steady hands on the steering wheel. Another would be the 45-degree slope where the pickup could slip or worse, turn turtle if the driver is not careful enough.

The D-Max we drove is the same one sold here: powered by a 3.0-liter, 130-horsepower intercooler turbocharged diesel engine and equipped with a shift-on-the-fly 4WD system.

Tri Petch Isuzu Sales Co. Ltd. marketing communications manager Jirayuth Adhidhebnarangkura assured us all the vehicles used where all unmodified to really test how the vehicle would perform.

Indeed, after what we have experienced and witnessed, the group is now much more convinced as to why the D-Max is also one of the most toughest and most trusted pickups here in the Philippines.

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ATTENDING the presentation of the certified rating of the new BMW 520d are (from left) Mario Marasigan, director, DOE Energy Utilization Management Bureau; Leana A. Farrales, BMW Philippines corporate communications manager; Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony A. Abaya; and Clovis Tupas, assistant director, DOE Energy Utilization Management Bureau.

# New BMW 520d posts top results in fuel economy run

THE NEW BMW 520D SHOWCASED ITS powerful yet fuel-efficient diesel engine at the recently staged Department of Energy (DOE) fuel economy run for passenger cars and light-duty vehicles. Amid adverse conditions—against gusting winds and steady downpour of rain brought by typhoon Caloy—the BMW 520d delivered outstanding results with an official DOE fuel consumption rating of 21.07 kilometers to a liter.

The government-sponsored efficiency test, which aims to promote the awareness of fuel economy among consumers, drew 27 entries from eight car manufacturers in the country. All cars were fueled under tight scrutiny, and then driven a total 163 km by randomly assigned volunteer drivers. The new BMW 520d proved to be a more fuel-efficient vehicle than those tested—delivering better results than a hybrid vehicle, as well as compact cars with much smaller engine displacements.

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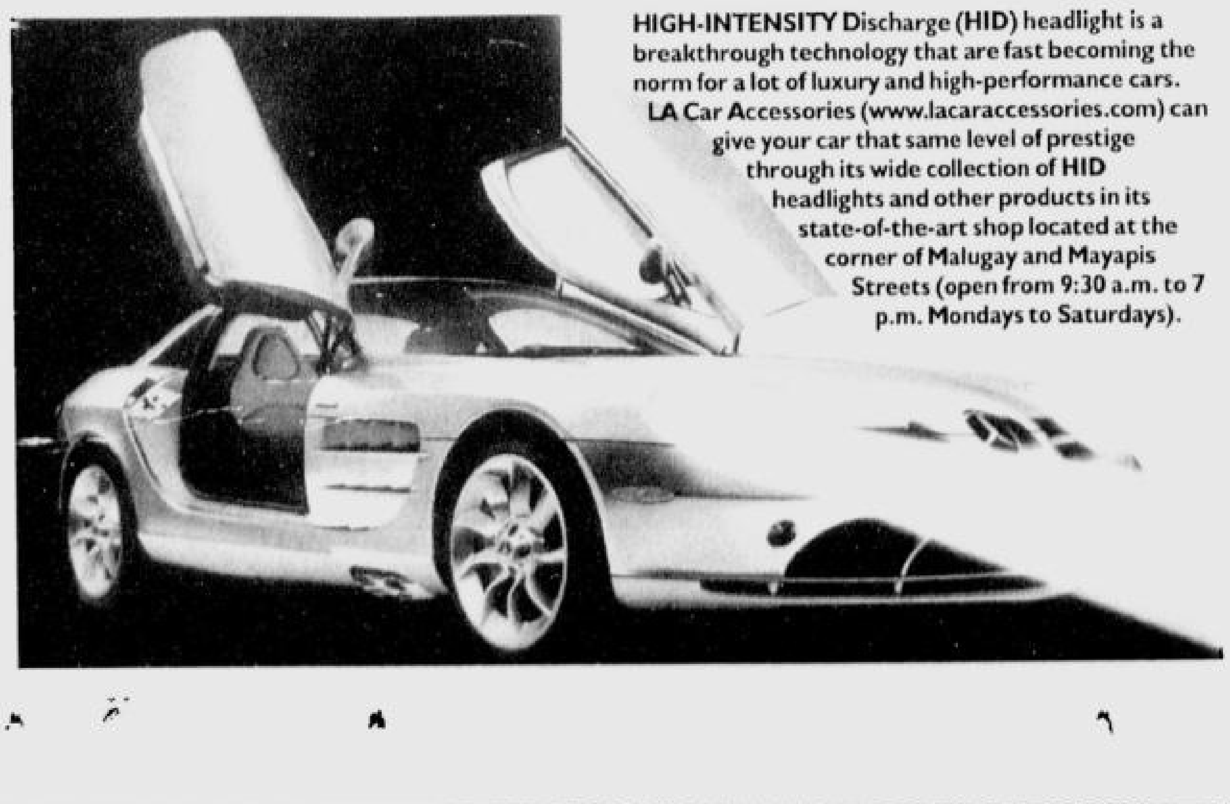

HIGH-INTENSITY Discharge (HID) headlight is a breakthrough technology that are fast becoming the norm for a lot of luxury and high-performance cars. LA Car Accessories (www.lacaraccessories.com) can give your car that same level of prestige through its wide collection of HID headlights and other products in its state-of-the-art shop located at the corner of Malugay and Mayapis Streets (open from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays).

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THE D-MAX showed off its well balanced frame while negotiating a 45-degree slope.

# Tested to face the roughest terrain

**Text and photos by Charles E. Buban**

THEY CALL THE PLACE ISUZU 4WD Land but for the majority of the Thai people this 20-hectare property located in Pattaya (roughly 170 kilometers southeast of Thailand capital, Bangkok) is perhaps Isuzu's best-kept secret.

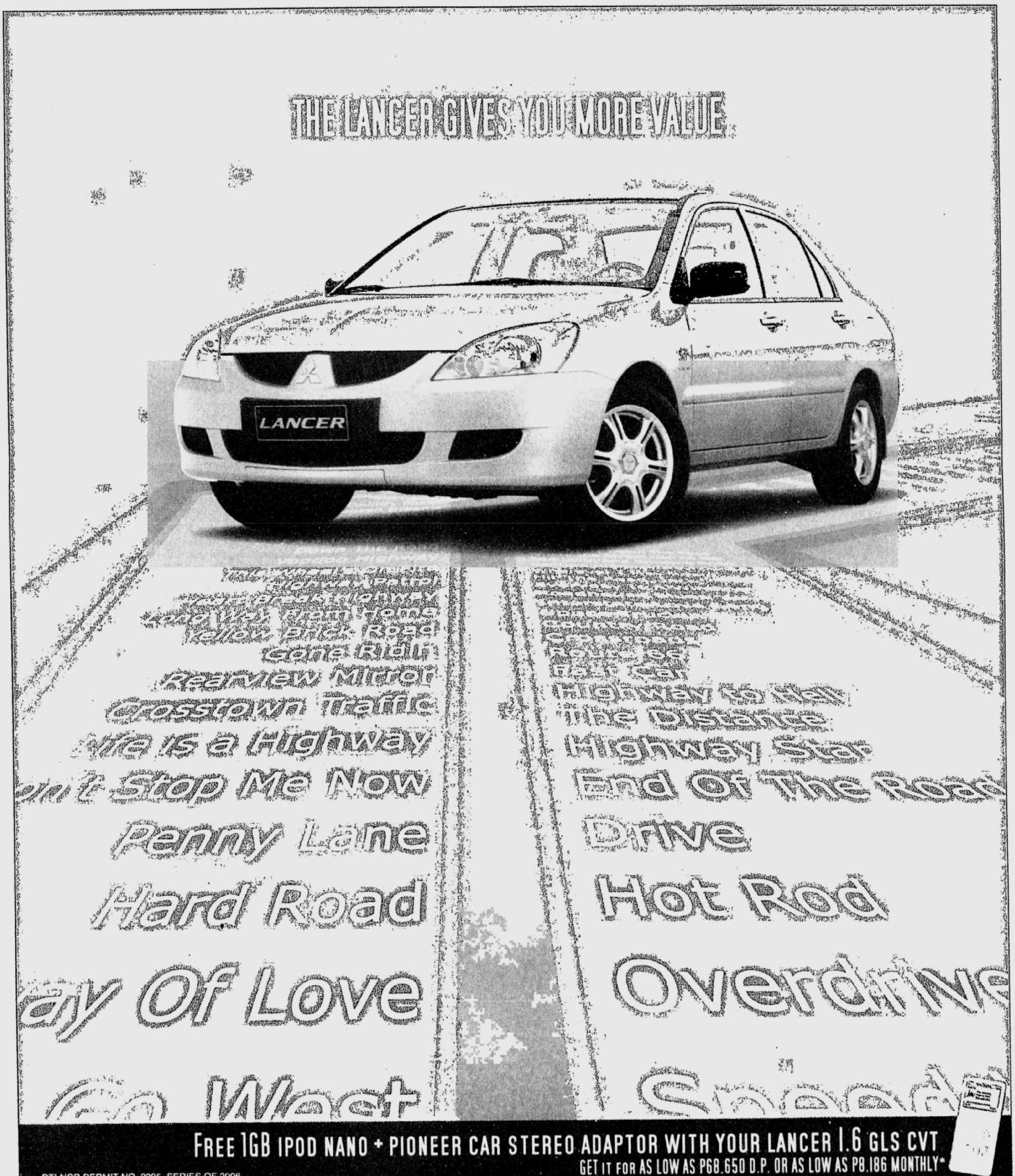
Here, Isuzu tests its upcoming vehicle model or finetune its existing ones as to whether they would stand up to the rigors of daily use and keep performing year after year.

Composed of 15 "stations," which are actually simulations of every tough terrain (except of course, ice, snow and boulders) that a standard vehicle model will probably encounter during its life, the Isuzu 4WD Land is a perfect place for any one who wants to hone his or her four-wheel driving skills.

Our group, composed of motoring journalists from the Philippines, was lucky enough to be invited to this place (courtesy of Isuzu Philippines Corp.) and discovered firsthand why the Isuzu D-Max has become the best-selling vehicle in the history of Thai-

TESTED/ B2-3

THE LANCER GIVES YOU MORE VALUE



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LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso** Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

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# BEAT BOREDOM

It's the tail-end of summer. By now, you've probably gone to the beach and back, have memorized the TV guide and gone to the mall so often you've memorized the guards' faces.

If you've run out of things to do, don't fret. 2bU! wants to save you from boredom. Here are ways to make sure your remaining summer days are action-packed, adventure-rich and fun-filled.

(And if there isn't enough time to do everything on this list, keep it as an anti-boredom weapon for drab school year weekends.)

to be young • to be you • to be young • to be you • To be you! • 2bU!

## 53 ways to keep yourself busy

**By Pam Pastor and Trina Yap**

WASH YOUR DAD'S CAR.

Take your dog for a long, long, long walk.

Tutor your sister and prepare her for June—if she'll let you.

Use your talents for a good cause.

Alphabetize your CDs and DVDs.

Organize your computer files.

Burn CDs of your friends' pictures and give them copies.

Make a scrapbook of your summer.

E-mail relatives abroad.

Go to Baguio.

Read about good music.

Learn a new sport.

Have a food delivery race. Invite your friends over and order from two different places. Try to guess which resto will bring food to your doorstep faster.

Record yourself while singing.

Jump up and down on your bed.

Set aside clothes that no longer fit or you'd never wear again and donate to the needy. Same goes with toys, books, magazines, etc.

Clean your computer. Don't forget the keyboard and the mouse.

Try rearranging the furniture in your room for a fresh look.

Go through your "letter box" and reread letters you've kept through the years. Throw out the ones that only remind you of things you'd rather forget. Read out loud to friends and family the silly ones.

Organize a DVD marathon with your friends. Tell them it's potluck.

Play board games with your siblings.

Start a last-song-syndrome epidemic.

Rearrange items in the refrigerator. Put items nearing the expiration date at the front. Send bad items to the garbage bin.

Sort e-mail. Delete junk mail, and other unnecessary e-mail. Do the same with your mobile phone.

Recycle old notebooks, keep the ones still with clean pages. Bring the rest (include old test papers, scratch papers, etc.) to a recycling center.

Sharpen pencils and crayons.

Check your pen holder for pens that no longer have ink. Throw out ink-less, non-refillable ones.

Check if your old school uniforms still fit.

Give your dog a massage. Or better yet, create a "dog spa" and invite your friends and their pooches, too. It's a good bonding activity.

Update your computer's software, check for viruses, defragment!

Watch your favorite TV shows on mute. Then create your own dialogues and create twisted storylines.

Create a wellness kit—something you can reach into for the future when you hit a slump. This could contain a favorite book, a good music CD, a bar of chocolate, incense, a bag of tea... whatever will cheer you up. Then create one for a friend.

Squeeze toothpaste tubes from the bottom.

Give yourself a makeover.

Try to tickle yourself.

Create your own accent and use it when talking to family members.

Scan your pictures.

Come up with your own evil laughter and horror-movie scream.

Google your name.

Look for your childhood crush on Friendster.

Start a new collection.

Learn Photoshop.

Play dress-up.

Have a sleepover.

Eat a banana split in the middle of the night at the lobby of the Peninsula.

Eat fishballs.

Ride the LRT or MRT from end to end just for the heck of it.

Hold a garage sale.

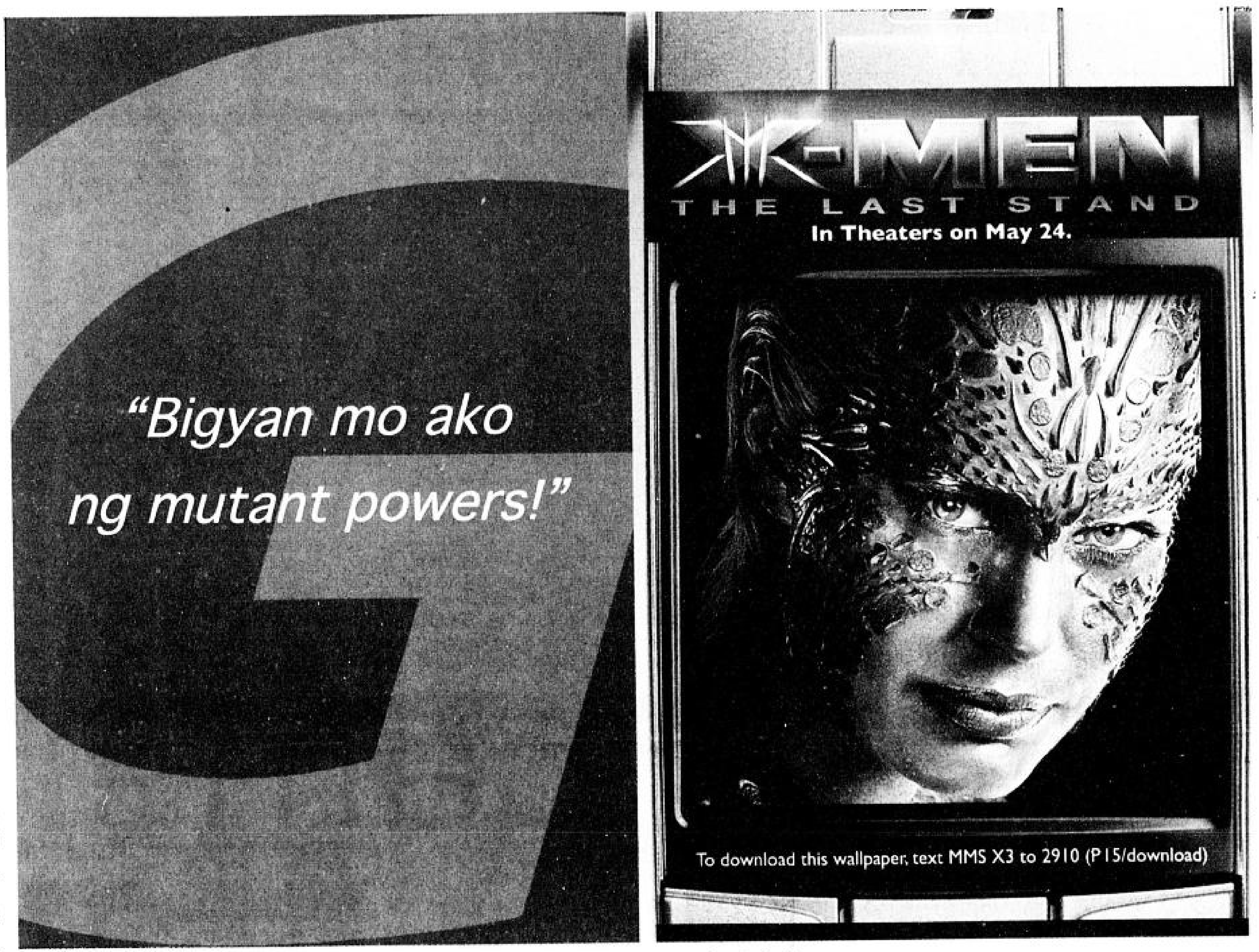
Join a radio contest.

Plant a tree.

Attempt to make your own clothes.

Read the dictionary.

Cook a meal for mom and dad.



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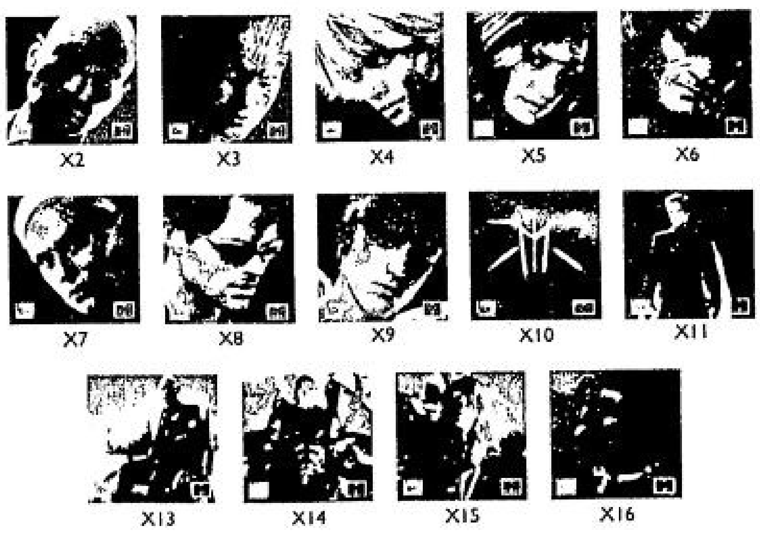

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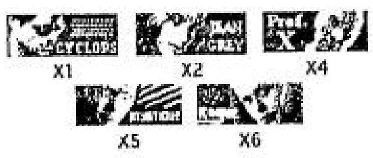

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MAG 7-ELEVEN MUNA

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# Get to know a new YOU

## INQ7 comes up with a more interactive youth section

**By Joey Alarilla**
*INQ7.net*

WHETHER YOU'D LIKE TO READ about the latest trends in fashion, pop culture and the party scene; get to know a lot of young people and the businesses they've put up, orgs they've joined or causes they've embraced; showcase your blogs, podcasts, pics, poems and personal essays; talk about the latest books, gadgets, movies and music albums; or share your passion for comic books, animé and other hobbies, the new YOU has something for you.

YOU, INQ7.net's site for the interactive youth, includes the online editions of the INQUIRER's 2bU! and Super! sections.

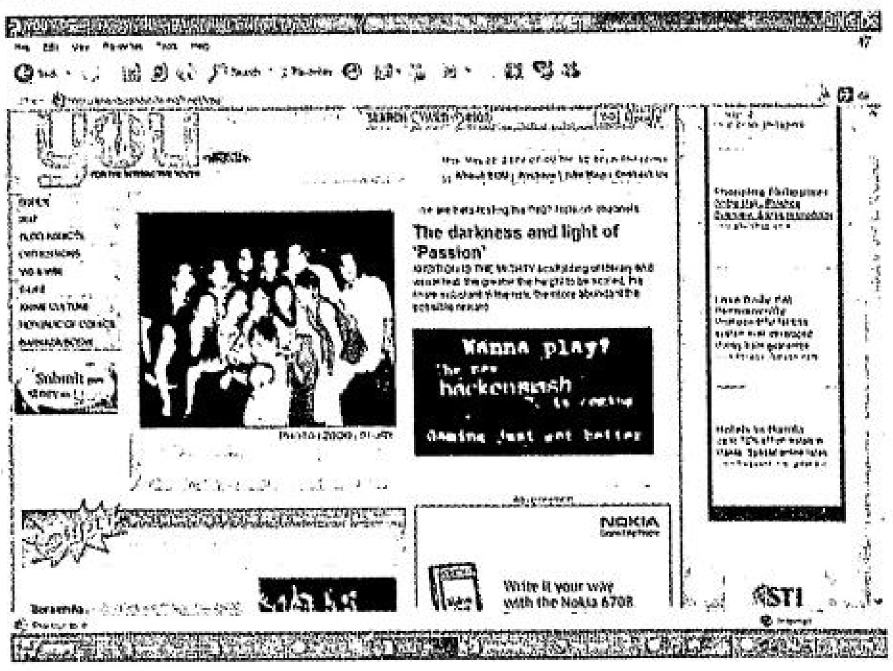
While the current YOU site is still online at you.inq7.net, you could already check out the new look at http://showbizandstyle.inq7.net/you. This is still a beta site, so please bear with us if some features don't work and you see some bizarre bugs, which our resident techies are in the process of squashing.

The revamp is part of the migration of the entire INQ7 network of sites to a new template and content management system. We hope you'll like what you see, and please feel free to tell us what you think. We'd really appreciate your feedback.

With the launch of the new YOU, I'm looking forward to closer collaboration with Pam Pastor and better integration between the print and online editions of 2bU! and Super! Pam and I have been informally discussing how our content will complement each other, to give you readers a unique experience that combines the best qualities of print and online.

The new YOU already has plenty of stuff to help you make the most out of the remaining days of summer and share your experiences with other young people from all over the country—and even around the world.

Got a great tan you'd like to show off, or happy memories of your outdoor adventures and other summer activities that you'd like to preserve for posterity? Then send your pics to YOU's new Barkada Scene online gallery. Maybe they're photos of you and your *barkada* enjoying a concert or showing off your moves on the dance floor. Maybe they're pics of your LAN parties, online gaming sessions and EBs. We'd like to find out how you spent your summer, and yup, a picture's worth a thousand words. We'll even start accepting videos you've shot with your digital video recorders, mobile phones or PDAs once we've completed the migration to the new YOU site. More on that soon.


The darkness and light of 'Passion'
Wanna play? The new hackenslash is coming
Gaming just got better
Write it your way with the Nokia 6708

### Events calendar

Barkada Scene also includes an events calendar, so if you've got stuff lined up for your school, org or company, just send us the details so we can share the sked with our readers.

And if you're dying to share a pic of you with your favorite celebrity, show if off in the Celebrity Cam section that we're creating for Barkada Scene. Just make sure to get their permission to have your pic taken with them, okay. We don't want stolen shots and we don't want you to start stalking celebrities.

Please e-mail your pics in jpeg format and include brief captions. Pics should be at least 300 pixels wide and at least 72 dpi. Actually, the bigger the pic, the better, so we can resize them for the thumbnail, standard and zoom versions.

Pics not to your taste? Then say it with words! YOU's Expressions section showcases poems, personal essays, short stories and book reviews submitted by readers. Tell us how you spent your summer. Which places did you visit? Did you get a summer job? Did you meet new people and make new friends? Which books did you enjoy reading? Maybe you joined a writer's workshop—tell us what the experience was like and share the insights you gained.

### Blog services

Or maybe you'd rather blog about it. We've expanded YOU's Blog Addicts section to not only give you the profiles of featured bloggers, but also tackle the different things you want to know about the blogosphere.

To kick things off, we'd like you to take part in the "I Know What You Blogged This Summer" feature. This is just for fun, OK, not an actual contest, but we'll showcase the best blog entries. We'll include your byline (just let us know if you want to use a nick) and a link back to your blog post. Just blog about what you did this summer and e-mail us the link to your post, and we'll check it out.

We'd also love to hear from you about your thoughts on different issues that affect bloggers, like plagiarism and spam. Plus the different cool apps you use for your blog. What add-ons do you use to spice up your blog? Would you rather swear allegiance to Tag-Board or Flooble? Maybe you've created a cool blog template—let us know so that our readers can check it out.

### E-Life section

And since there's still more to life online than blogs, YOU also has an E-Life section to showcase the hardware and software that will please the inner geek in you. What's the latest mobile phone you've bought? Are you enjoying the 3G experience? Do you go to coffee shops not just for your caffeine but also your wi-fi fix?

We'd also love to hear (and see, in the case of video podcasts) the podcasts you've created yourself, so just point us in the right direction and we'll review your baby.

The new YOU will also feature the debut of Republic of Comics and Animé Culture. We want to share our love for comics and animé while also doing our share to support Filipino comic book writers and artists, and Filipino animators.

You'll be reading a lot about the local comic book scene, even as we discuss the latest in comic book events. Which comic books did you enjoy this summer? Share your thoughts about the just-concluded Infinite Crisis and the ongoing 52 and One Year Later titles from DC. Or maybe you'd like to weigh in on Marvel's Civil War. And of course, Neil Gaiman is God. 'Nuff said.

Meanwhile, Animé Culture will not only feature the actual shows and movies, but also the thriving community and culture that animé has created. We'll feature cosplayers, as well as animé-related video games, CDs, action figures, accessories and other merchandise. Cosplay pics are very much welcome.

Please e-mail all submissions to joeyalarilla@gmail.com. Unfortunately, we can't offer contributor's fees for what we'll publish online, but it's a chance to see your byline and share your message with a worldwide audience. All submissions are subject to editorial discretion.

Thanks again to all our readers for supporting YOU all these years. The new YOU is coming, and we'd like you all to be a part of it.

*The author is the editor of YOU. E-mail him at joeyalarilla@gmail.com and visit his blog at babelmachine.wordpress.com.*

## Know thyself

**By Walter Ang**
*2bU! Contributor*

THE WORLD CAN BE A FUN, SCARY, exciting and crazy place to live in. It helps if you can figure out who you are and how you can best deal with people.

Take a trip to tickle.com/tests to take a gamut of personality tests to see how you fare at this time in your life. There are loads of profiling tests that range from the serious (the classic IQ test) to the quirky (What kind of troublemaker are you?) and outrageously fun (What breed of dog are you?).

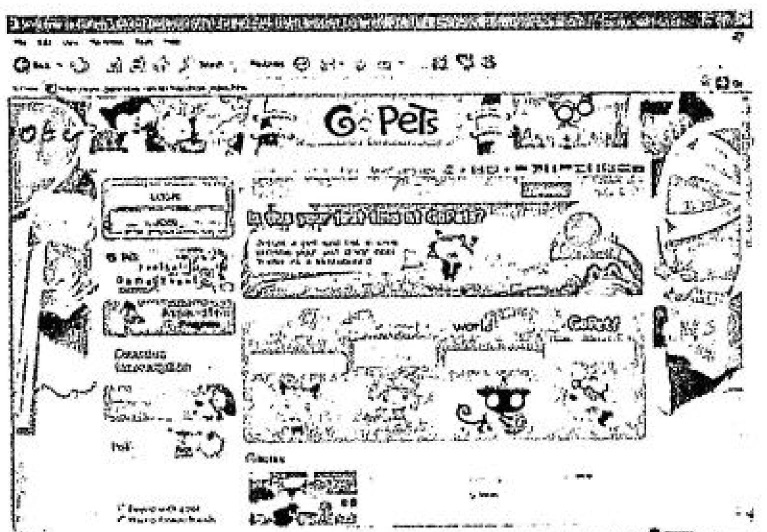
You can share your scores with your friends while you spend some time reflecting on your results and using them as a tool to better yourself.

Now, if you want a little more esoteric form of guidance to help you prepare for the coming school year, perhaps you'd like to venture into the realm of astrology. Based on thousands of years of observation (of the stars, of world events, of human behavior), astrology gets a bad rap for being linked to the occult, but as all good astrologers say, the stars only light the way, you choose your own path.

Try out Susan Miller's www.astrologyzone.com for some straightforward and uplifting descriptions of your inherent behaviors based on your sign, romantic compatibility, and monthly forecasts. You'll never know what's really in store for you in the months to come, but you can take comfort in finding a reason for your little personality quirks and motivations.

# Ready, get set... game!

## Be a good gamer, whether online or at the arcade



MARIOKART DS
THE RACE IS ON!

**By Joey Alarilla**
*INQ7.net*

HERE ARE A FEW GAMES YOU CAN TRY out to while away the last few weeks before school opens. Don't get too addicted, however. Remember that too much of anything is a bad thing, and games are no exception.

### Attack of the MMOGs

Sure, massively multi-player online games is quite a mouthful, but many of us are already familiar with these online games that allow us to play with thousands of other players all over the Philippines and sometimes even around the world.

Ragnarok Online was what popularized MMOGs in the Philippines, but you have a host of other choices available, including MU, Khan, Tantra, Ran Online, SkyBlade, PristonTale, Legend of Mir 2, TS Online, ROSE, RF Online and Guild Wars.

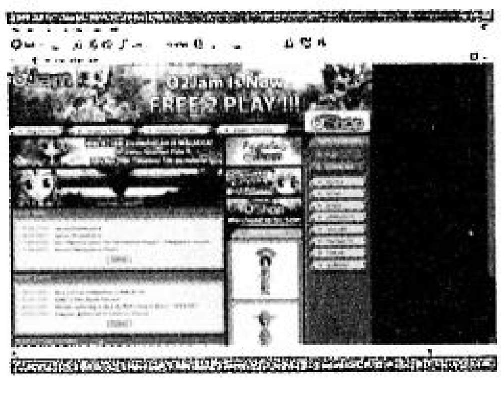
While ranging from fantasy to modern and sci-fi settings, what these games have in common are the thriving online communities that have sprung up around them. MMOGs are more than just the actual games. Lots of young people now bond with each other, communicate and collaborate through online games.

Just as in real life, it's all about getting along with people and having fun with your *barkada*.

### Casual is cool

Some so-called hardcore gamers diss casual games, but these games are some of the most fun and addictive titles around, so don't let others spoil your fun.

As the name already tells you, casual games don't demand a lot of time from players, so you can enjoy them in bite-size chunks without worrying about leveling up. These are usually games you can download quickly, play for hours and then set aside for weeks without getting left behind by other players. Well, assuming you can tear yourself away from these games. Some of the most popular examples include puzzle games such as Tetris and Bejeweled.



A number of Philippine online publishers are also becoming very serious about casual games, which appeal to more people. An example of this is the musical game O2Jam. In real life, I have two left feet when it comes to dancing. O2Jam proves I also have two left thumbs when it comes to this rhythm game.

If hiphop and basketball are your thing, then Freestyle might be just what the doctor ordered. This hiphop basketball game allows you to play three-on-three street ball games with your crew, while outfitting your player with all kinds of bling.

Meanwhile, if you find virtual pets irresistibly cute, GoPets allows you to meet different kinds of people from all over the world. No need to worry about breaking the ice. Your pets wander through the virtual world and make acquaintances for you.

Different spins on casual games include the Gunbound online shooting game and the HyperRelay series of mini-games.

You can also get tons of casual games from sites such as PopCap.com and apps like RealArcade. One of the games to check out is word-puzzle game Bonnie's Bookstore. Filipino Von Caberte created the artwork for this game. Check out the story in the Gaming Scene section of www.hackenslash.net to find out how he collaborated entirely online with US developer Phil Steinmeyer on Bonnie's Bookstore.

### Flash in the pan

We love Flash- and Shockwave-based games, and one of the best at Shockwave.com is No Brainer 2. Find out how quickly you can answer stupid but fun questions.

### Arcade madness

Who says you need PCs or your own video console to enjoy games?

Going to the arcade is a great way to spend quality time with the *barkada*. So how about some Mario loving with Mario Kart, and other faves such as Tekken 5 and Dinosaur Duel"

Head on to TimeZone or Q Power Station for some arcade fun today.

These are just some of the ways you can have fun with games this summer. Just remember: Be a responsible gamer!

*The author is the editor of hackenslash.net, the gaming site of INQ7.net. E-mail joeyalarilla@gmail.com or visit babelmachine.wordpress.com.*

*Check out the May-June issue of Game, the gaming magazine of Hinge* INQUIRER *Publications.*

# Become a badminton star

OR AT LEAST PREPARE TO BE one.

The JVC Open Badminton Championships 2006, which will take place at the Glorietta Activity center July 2-9, will be accepting entries until June 10, 5 p.m. The qualifying rounds will be held June 25-July 1 at PowerSmash Badminton Center.

Now on its sixth year, this year's JVC Open was launched at the Renaissance Makati Hotel.

At stake are over P1 million in cash and other prizes from JVC and other sponsors like Victor, Bacchus Energy Drink, Lactacyd, Snickers Chocolates, Pioneer Life, L-Time Studio, Alaska, The Ayala Center, Accel, Sunbolt, PowerSmash Badminton Center, Solar Sports and Magic 89.9.

Participants will compete in Masters Elite (current and former national team players), Elite, Junior 16 and under, Veterans Masters, Veterans (Non-Pro), and Corporate (teams from the country's top 1,000 corporations). The Invitational Categories will include the CEO Challenge, Alumni Invitational Team event and Celebrity event.

BUTCH Ramirez, Hideyuki Takato, Hon. José Cojuangco Jr., Dennis Salud, Mayor Jejomar Binay, lawyer Faustino Salud and Steve Hontiveros

NANCY Castiglione, Tin Arnaldo, Cynthia Carrion (Department of Tourism), Kazue Salud (general manager, JVC Phils.) and Jenny Hernandez

BAKLAVA, the perfect dessert

TASTY Cabbage Rolls with minced meat and rice

BAKED Summer Vegetables

# Travel with your tastebuds

## Manos' Greek Taverna's tasty, authentic cuisine makes the trip to Tagaytay worth it

**Text and Photos By Zee Castro**
*2bu! Correspondent*

SINCE SUMMER IS JUST ABOUT GONE, and traveling to distant lands seem out of the question, why not have a gustatory adventure by traveling through your taste buds instead?

**Destination:** Greece

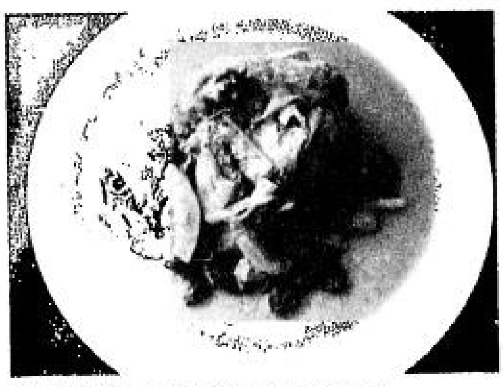
**The Place:** Manos' Greek Taverna

**Location:** Along Tagaytay-Sta. Rosa Road, Brgy. San Jose, Tagaytay City, across St. Francis seminary

This cozy food stop is run by chef Manos Sapountzakis and his wife Estrella. The interiors of the *taverna* are quite stark and simple. Greece's colors of blue and white are dominant all throughout the place. The walls are plastered with posters of beautiful scenery, and the windows are covered with light lace curtains that dance along with the breeze.

This is definitely not a fine-dining resto. As Manos explains, a *taverna* is the Greek equivalent of a high-class *carinderia* that offers good-quality food.

The tasty, authentic Greek cuisine, the *taverna's* cozy ambience and the warmth of its staff make the trip to Tagaytay well worth it!



**CHICKEN** a la Corfu, a sweet-sour combination

First, try the Ouzo, an alcoholic clear-colored drink made from anise. A shot of Ouzo is poured into a glass of water. According to Manos, this makes for an authentic Greek appetizer.

For starters, try the fresh-baked bread paired with Tzatziki, a dip made of yogurt, garlic and olive oil (P80). Prepare for the dip's strong flavor.

The Greek Summer Salad has fresh greens and tomatoes drizzled with olive oil and topped off with black olives and feta cheese. The olive oil and olives are imported from plantations in Cretem, says Manos. A generous serving will set you back P120. If you're more adventurous, try the Rathika Vastra or Dandelion Salad (P90). Yep, it's made of dandelion leaves!

For the main dish, Taverna's bestseller is the Mousaka, made of eggplant, potatoes, zucchini, minced meat, eggs, wine, béchamel sauce, and cheese. At P180 a serving, it is worth every peso!

Other must-tries are the Lamb Fricasse, a stew of lettuce, onions, butter, dill eggs and spices (P260); Grilled Lamb Ribs that come with vegetable sidings (P270); Cabbage Rolls with minced meat, rice and spices (P155); and the Pasticcio, a Greek version of Baked Mac (P120).

To cap off the experience, enjoy a serving of Baklava (P150) with a cup of Greek coffee.

Call Manos' Green Taverna at 0916-4298358 and 0916-6090701.

*E-mail the author at zeecastro@yahoo.com*

# Throw a pizza party

**By Pam Pastor**

AND THROWING A PIZZA PARTY doesn't necessarily mean buying 10 pizzas. You can settle for one or two if you order from Jugno's Monster Pizzas, one of the city's best secrets.

The Monster Pizza, which is 20 inches in diameter, can be sliced into 42 slices and is good for eight to 12 people. It can have two, three or four different flavors. You can choose from five classic flavors: Pepperoni, Beef N' Mushroom, Hawaiian, All-Veggie and our favorite, Spicy Taco.

You can also try Jugno's signature flavors: Jugno's Special (salami, pepperoni, lettuce, beef, black olives, mushrooms, bell pepper, pineapple and diced onions), Chicken Sausage, All-Meaty and Tandoori Chicken.

Monster Size... Monster Taste!
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Monster Pizzas can go from P448 to P590, depending on the flavor combinations. If your appetite isn't huge, you can also go for the 12-inch Mini-Monster which can be enjoyed by four to six people (P190-P240) or the seven-inch Kiddie-Monster which can be eaten by one or two persons (P59-P80).

Apart from the size and your ability to mix and match flavors, another thing that makes Jugno's different is the garlic sauce that comes with the pizza. Other must-tries are the side orders: salsa chips, shawarma, roasted chicken, pasta and cookies.

Prepare your cameras if you order one of the monsters! You'll definitely want to take a picture of that giant pizza.

*For Quezon City deliveries, call 7114247. For Ortigas, Pasig and Mandaluyong deliveries, call 6347608. For Ortigas, Makati, Pasay, San Juan and Mandaluyong deliveries, call 5313756. For Makati, Pasay and Baclaran, call 4723285. Visit http://jugnomonsterpizza.atspace.com/*

BURN
CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA + NINA
BURN
ORANGE AND LEMONS
BURN
PUSSYCAT DOLLS
PUPIL
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
BURN
PUPIL
ELY BUENDIA'S NEW OLD BAND

# Get some music into your life

AND WE DON'T MEAN JUST listening to more music. Why not learn to play a musical instrument as well? Or read up on your favorite bands, find out what gigs to go to, what new music is out there.

You can do all that just by picking up Burn, the new music magazine from Hinge INQUIRER Publications. The all-inclusive Burn magazine covers all genres of music—pop, rock, indie, even jazz and Latin.

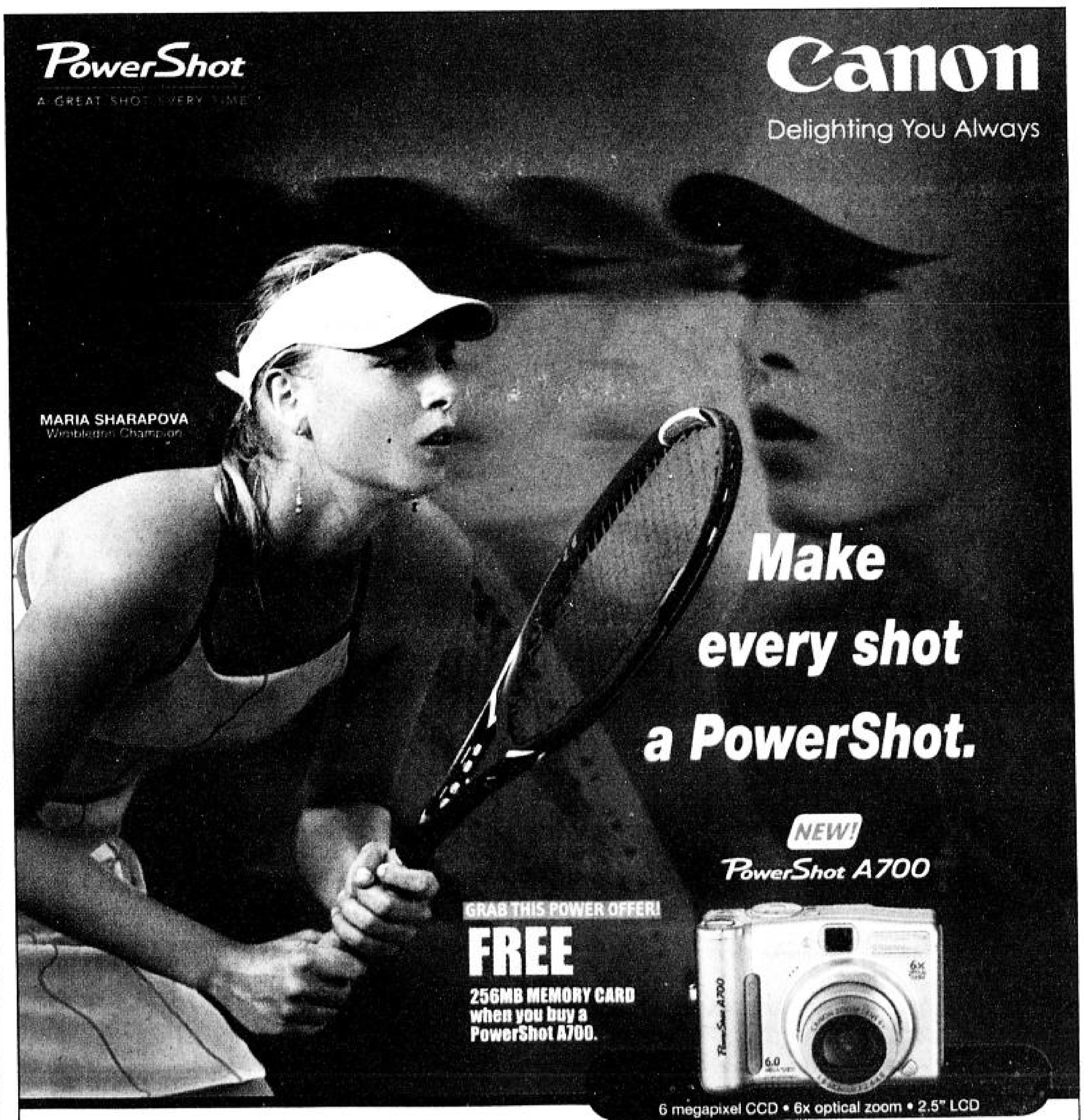
You'll likely find something that will suit your tastes, and also learn more about other genres (you might be missing out on something).

You can read about well-known bands like Pupil, Up Dharma Down, Kapatid and Orange and Lemons, as well as up-and-coming groups like Nyko Maca, Sitti, Bagetsafonik, Chillitees and Giniling Festival.

A free compact disc that comes with every magazine features a "radio" show hosted by former NU107 DJ Zach Lucero (the same Zach Lucero who's the drummer of rock band Imago) with short interviews, in-studio performances and other music tracks. Some of the tracks are rarities, so the CDs are actually collectibles (hang on to every copy and see you on eBay in five years).

A favorite feature is the Music Lesson both on the CD and in the magazine. Burn's April-May issue features a guitar tutorial from guitarist Francis Reyes of legendary Pinoy rock band The Dawn, while the June-July issue has a hot, hot, hot lesson in samba percussions from Batucada leader Inky de Dios.

It's a lot to get from only one music magazine and, at P120, it's well worth the price. Burn is available at newsstands and some bookstores.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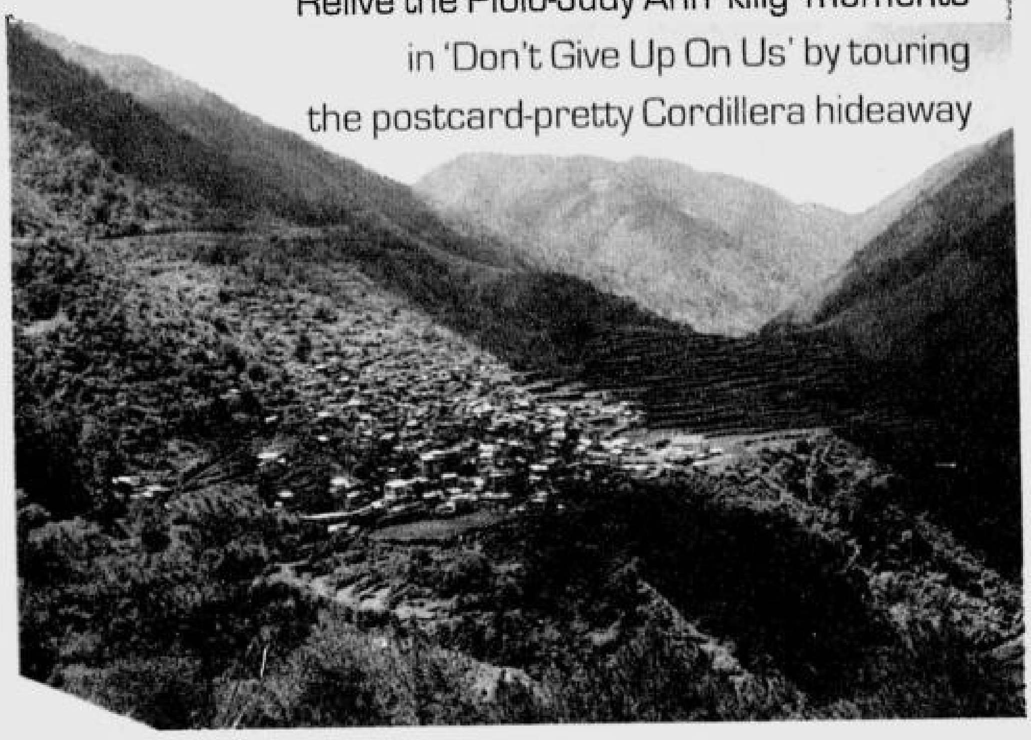
# Take a break in Sagada

Relive the Piolo-Judy Ann 'kilig' moments in 'Don't Give Up On Us' by touring the postcard-pretty Cordillera hideaway


ONE of the many rice terraces seen on the road from Banaue to Sagada

**By Melissa Telan**
*2bU! Correspondent*

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THE most of what's left of summer but are tired of the beach, why not head to cool Sagada for a different kind of adventure? All you need is a sturdy pair of feet, a liking for nature, a couple of friends to share the experience with, and about P3,000 for a four-day stay. Ready to go? Here's a quick guide to help you out.

BREATHTAKING scenery at Kiltepan view point

## Getting there

Located 275 km north of Metro Manila, Sagada is a long 12-13 hours ride away, but is well worth the wait. If you get dizzy easily be sure to take Bonamine, as the roads tend to be rough and snakelike.

If you're planning to take a bus, there are two routes to Sagada—one via Banaue-Bontoc and another via Baguio. The rates are practically the same. For those who haven't seen the famous rice terraces, the Banaue route is recommended. It is also more scenic as you get to pass by other smaller rice terraces, as well as get a fantastic view of the Cordilleras.

If you wish to take the Banaue route, contact Autobus at tel. 7358096 for reservations. Buy tickets early since they only have one trip leaving at 10 p.m. each day. If you're planning to take the Baguio route, contact Victory Liner Cubao at tel. 7274534.

**Cost:** From Metro Manila, about P1,200 round trip.

## Where to stay

Locals claim that Sagada is now the second top tourist spot of the country, next only to Boracay. To house its growing number of guests, Sagada boasts of numerous inns to accommodate everyone, so it shouldn't be a problem to find lodging only upon arrival. However, when going there during the holidays or long weekends, it is imperative to book early. Inns tend to be full on such days that guests are sometimes forced to stay in the hospital until a vacancy comes.

Sagada is not a place to look for hotel-type accommodations, so don't fret if your bathroom is cramped or you pillows are threadbare. Most inns have a rustic feel to it, which suits the ambiance of the place.

If you can get a room, stay in St. Joseph's Resthouse, which sits on top of a hill and is at the center of the town. It also offers the most amazing view of the mountains. Rates start at P200 per head, per night.

**Other places to stay are:** Rock Inn (one of the newer inns in Sagada, also the place featured in the Piolo Pascual-Judy Ann Santos movie "Don't Give Up On Us"), George Guest House and Alfredo's Inn.

## What to do

Upon arrival, guests should visit the Municipal Hall where the Tourist Center is located. Hiring a local guide is necessary for safety reasons. Fees start at P400 per guide per tourist spot, with each guide capable of leading anywhere between four to 10 persons (depending on the tourist spot). Be prepared to do a lot of walking, since that is the only way to appreciate Sagada's lush sceneries. Inhaling the musky-sweet pine-tinged air while climbing a mountain is perhaps as exhilarating as reaching the mountain's summit.

They say you cannot claim to have been to Sagada without spelunking in Sumaging cave, a 30-minute walk from the town center. It is an experience different from others—from wiggling through the cave's narrow crevices to clinging on rock boulders for your dear life, to finally dipping your feet in the cool underground river as a reward for your hard work. It takes an hour to descend the cave, and a bit longer climbing back up.

To see how the Igorot buried their dead, take a hike to Echo Valley and see the Lumiang burial caves. The old Igorot practice is to tie their deceased seated on a chair-like contrivance and place such contrivances inside caves. The remains can be seen in the valley's caves. Also hidden in the valley's dense foliage are the famous hanging coffins of Sagada.

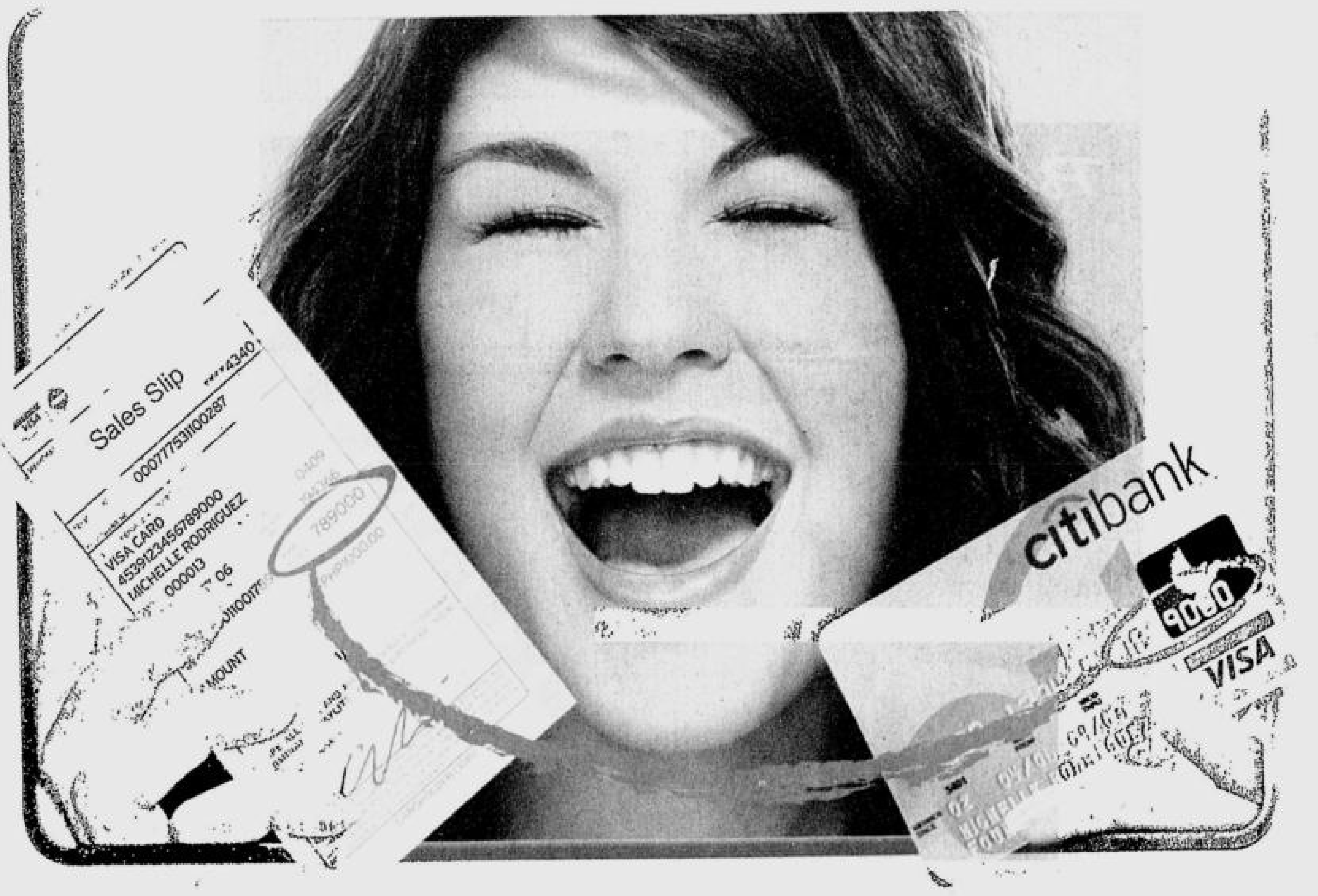
**Other places to visit:** Kiltepan view, Bomod-ok Falls, and Lake Danom.

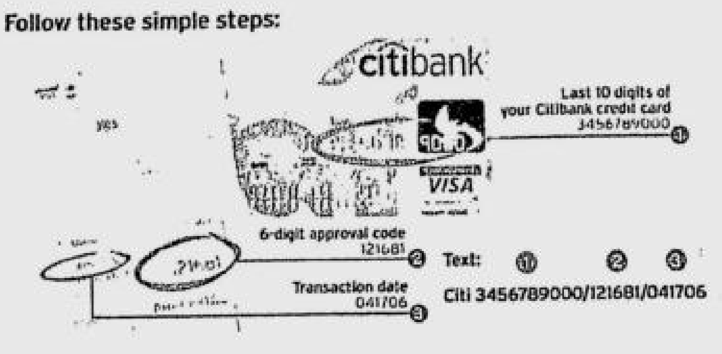
## Food trip

After hours of trekking, Sagada rewards its guests by offering mouthwatering cuisine, only made better by the crisp mountain air. Try St. Joe's Café, located beside St. Joseph's Resthouse, where you can dine al fresco with the view of the breathtaking Cordilleras as a background. Yoghurt House offers homemade yummy yoghurt (hence, its name) as well pastas and the best-tasting Mixed Vegetable fried rice.

If you're in Sagada on a Saturday, by all means get reservations for the Saturday French dinner buffet at the cozy Log Cabin. For P250, guests can sample dishes prepared by Chef Aklay, a Frenchman who came to Sagada more than a decade ago. Reserve at least three days early, as seating is limited. It is common for the Log Cabin staff to turn away guests on Saturday nights since they are usually full.

*Eimail the author at melissatelan@yahoo.com*

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Last 10 digits of your Citibank credit card 3456789000 ①
6-digit approval code 121681 ②
Transaction date 041706 ③
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|---|---|---|
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| 4539 2222 2228 9000 | Last 5-digits | ₱10,000 |
| 4539 3333 3333 9000 | Last 4-digits | ₱1,000 |
| 4539 7777 7777 7000 | Last 3-digits | ₱100 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A, B, C | 1 | P, Q | 6 |
| D, E, F | 2 | R, S | 7 |
| G, H, I | 3 | T, U | 8 |
| J, K, L | 4 | V, W | 9 |
| M, N, O | 5 | X, Y, Z | 0 |

Example: If the approval code on your sales slip is R89000, text in 789000.

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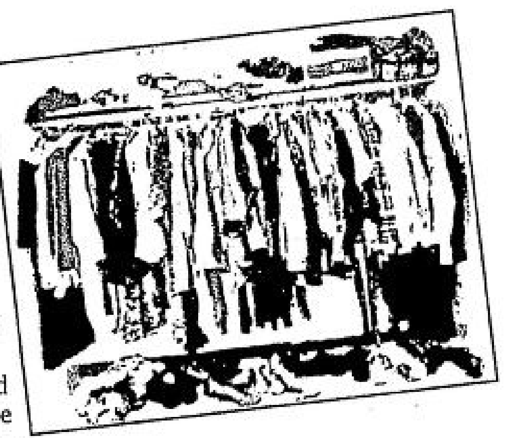
# Out of the closet

**By Bianca Consunji**
*2bU! Correspondent*



SUMMER is the best time to clean out the skeletons in your closet—the clothes you don't use, that is.

While it's not a bad thing to keep a couple of pieces, such as the ratty old shirts you love wearing at home and would never throw away, or your fluffy prom gown, some things simply have to go. So if you're still keeping that hideous orange-and-green sunflower blouse along with moldy old clogs in hopes of a '90s comeback, it's time to let go.

> If you're still keeping that hideous orange-and-green sunflower blouse along with moldy old clogs in hopes of a '90s comeback, it's time to let go

This is easier said than done for many pack rats. However, the sooner you accept that there is no way to make your closet any larger (short of building a new one), the faster you'll get your organizing done.

**Block off a day to clear your closet.** If you cram in everything in a couple of hours, your room will be back to its original (messy) condition in a few weeks. Empty out everything so you can really see what items to keep and what things should be thrown or given away. Also, if you invest more time in organizing your space, chances are you'll be more careful not to make a mess of it again any time soon.

**Have trash bags and boxes ready.** Again, be prepared to be callous. Don't hesitate to throw things away. You will not regret disposing of those acid-green shorts. If you're sorting out papers, be sure to read everything twice to make sure you don't throw out anything important.

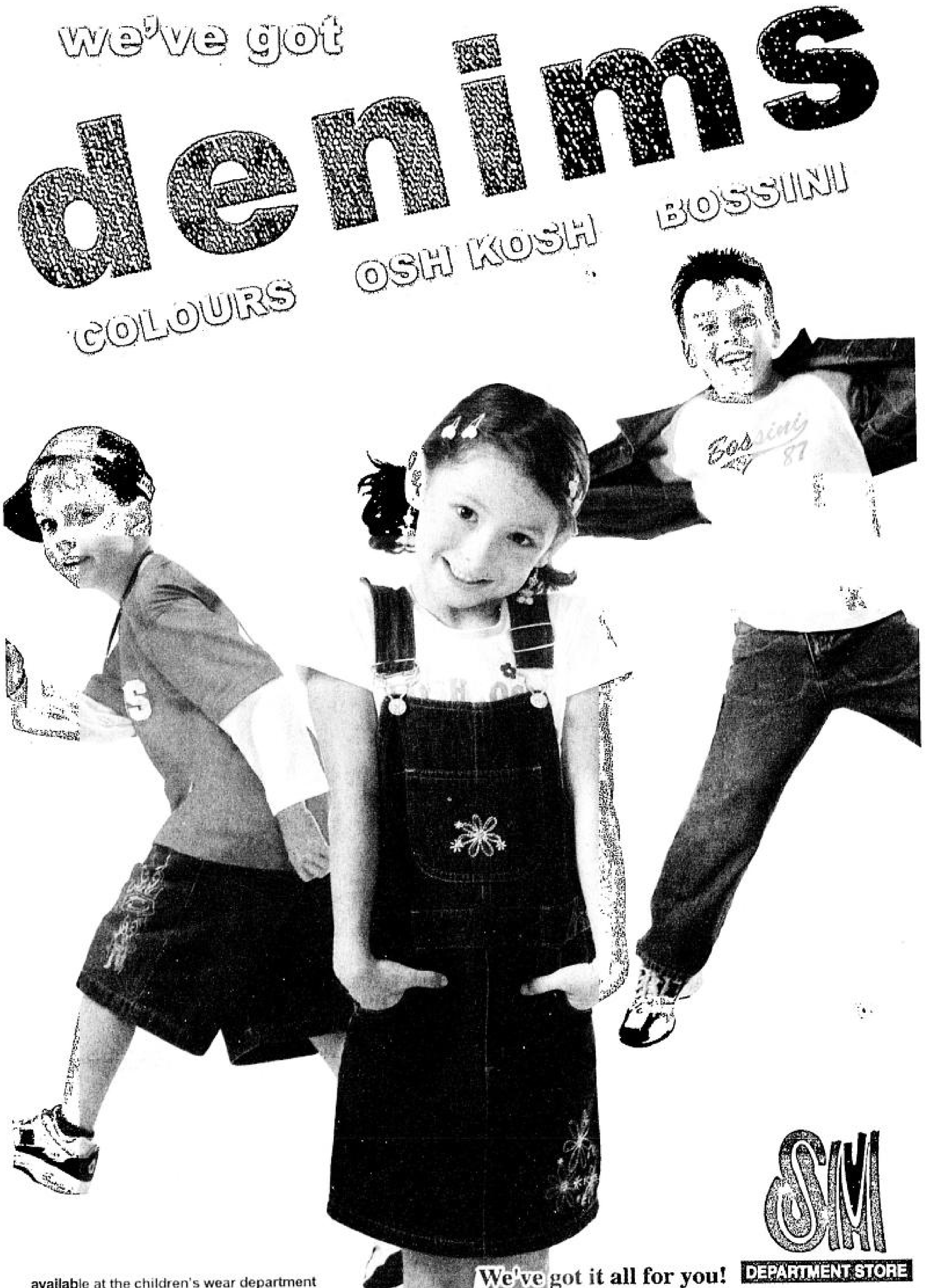
**Buy closet organizers.** Extra boxes and shelves inside your closet space guarantee more space to stash your things. Put items with a common theme (polo shirts, tank tops, underwear) in one area, so you—or your helper—will be able to store and find clothes and miscellaneous items quickly.

**Color-code.** No, this is not for obsessive-compulsive people only. Organizing your clothes by color and style will help you store and find stuff more efficiently. So if you can't find White Ruffled Skirt in between Embroidered White Tank Top and White Linen Pants, that can only mean it's in the laundry or is lost. Either way, at least no one can say, "It must be somewhere in the depths of your closet."

**Sell or donate.** To get rid of your clothes effectively, either sell your stuff online or have a garage sale. Barring that, take the noble option: Donate. Call your favorite charity to ask where you can drop off goods, but make sure the stuff you give is in good condition.

*E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com*

**YOU know you should clean your cabinet if your clothes still look like this.**



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# COMIC Relief

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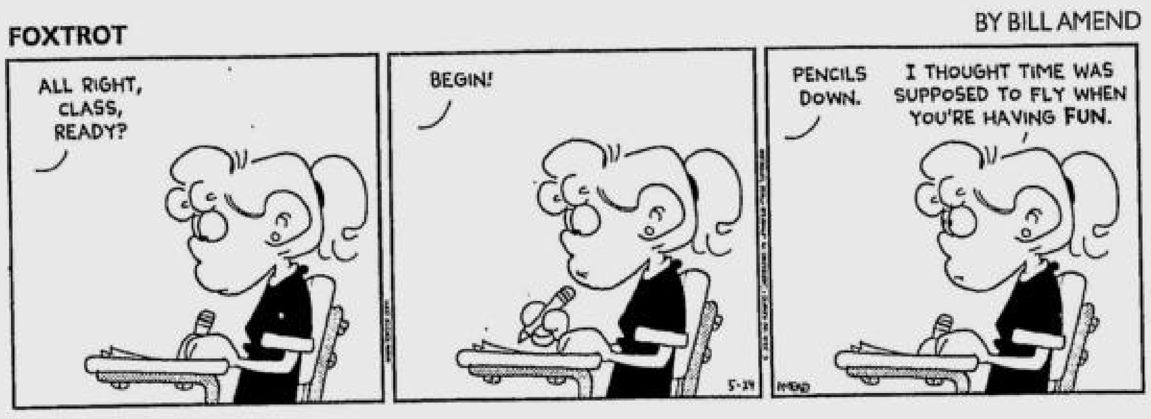
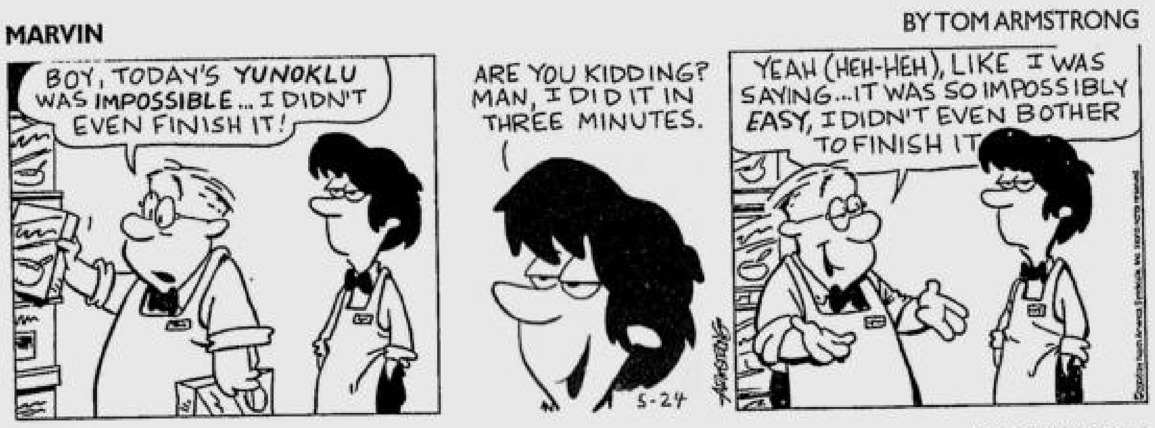
**FOXTROT**

BY BILL AMEND


ALL RIGHT, CLASS, READY?
BEGIN!
PENCILS DOWN.
I THOUGHT TIME WAS SUPPOSED TO FLY WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
5-24

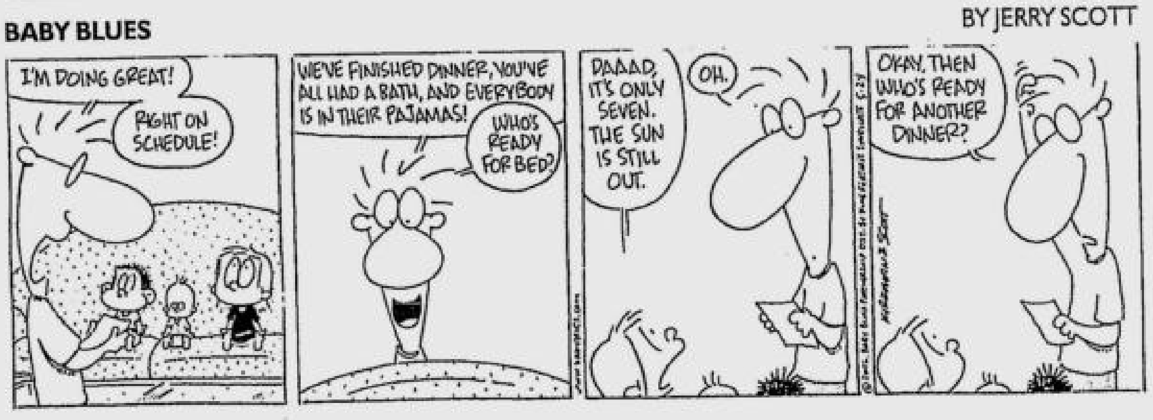
**MARVIN**

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BOY, TODAY'S YUNOKLU WAS IMPOSSIBLE... I DIDN'T EVEN FINISH IT!
ARE YOU KIDDING? MAN, I DID IT IN THREE MINUTES.
YEAH (HEH-HEH), LIKE I WAS SAYING...IT WAS SO IMPOSSIBLY EASY, I DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO FINISH IT.
5-24

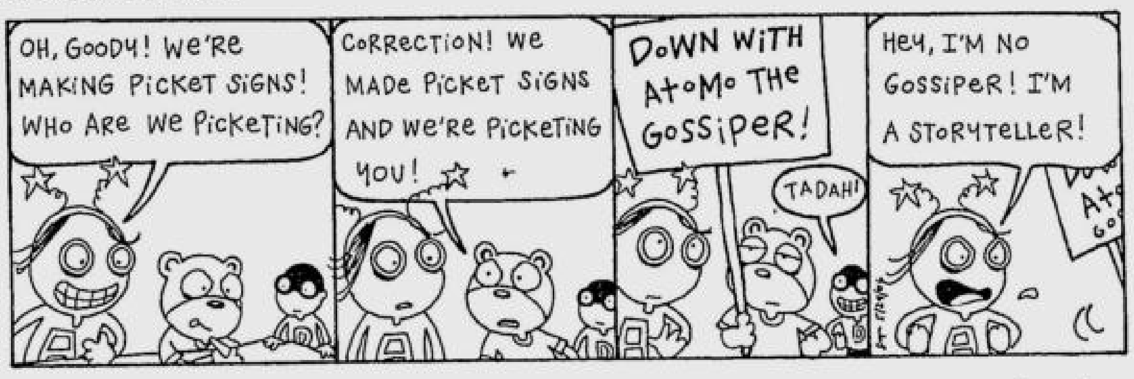
**BABY BLUES**

BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M DOING GREAT!
RIGHT ON SCHEDULE!
WE'VE FINISHED DINNER, YOU'VE ALL HAD A BATH, AND EVERYBODY IS IN THEIR PAJAMAS!
WHO'S READY FOR BED?
DAAAD, IT'S ONLY SEVEN. THE SUN IS STILL OUT.
OH.
OKAY, THEN WHO'S READY FOR ANOTHER DINNER?

**ATOMO AND WEBOY**

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OH, GOODY! WE'RE MAKING PICKET SIGNS! WHO ARE WE PICKETING?
CORRECTION! WE MADE PICKET SIGNS AND WE'RE PICKETING YOU!
DOWN WITH ATOMO THE GOSSIPER!
TADAH!
HEY, I'M NO GOSSIPER! I'M A STORYTELLER!

# HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You have a strong social conscience and often become involved in causes dear to your heart. Others listen to you because you're imaginatively expressive. You invariably fight for the underdog. You're philosophical. You're attracted to ideas. In your later years (late 50s, 60s and 70s), you become surprisingly flamboyant. Expect to start off on a new path this year.
**Birthdate of:** Tommy Chong, actor; Bob Dylan, singer; Patti LaBelle, singer.

**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19): Today you can think of new ways to earn money. You're feeling very resourceful, and you're thinking about possessions and your cash flow. (Unfortunately, cash always seems to flow one way.)

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20): You have some good ideas about how to improve your appearance today. Follow up on them. All good things begin with a positive intention to improve something.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20): If you're looking for secrets or answers to difficult questions, today you might find them. Your research skills are strong. (In addition, information just comes to you today.)

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22): Resist the urge to try to make over a friend or suggest improvements. (Nobody really likes this.) Turn this urge inward and think about how to improve your friendships.

**LEO** (July 23 to Aug. 22): Discussions with parents and bosses are quite forceful today. You know what you want, and you intend to get it. (Remember that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.)

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Religious and political discussions interest you today. Someone might say something that shifts your point of view. It's good to keep an open mind, but not so open that everything falls out.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might see new applications for old things today. Or you might want to recycle something you own so that someone else can use it in a new way.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Conversations with others might become quite heated this morning. If you sense this starting to happen, just wait till later in the day.

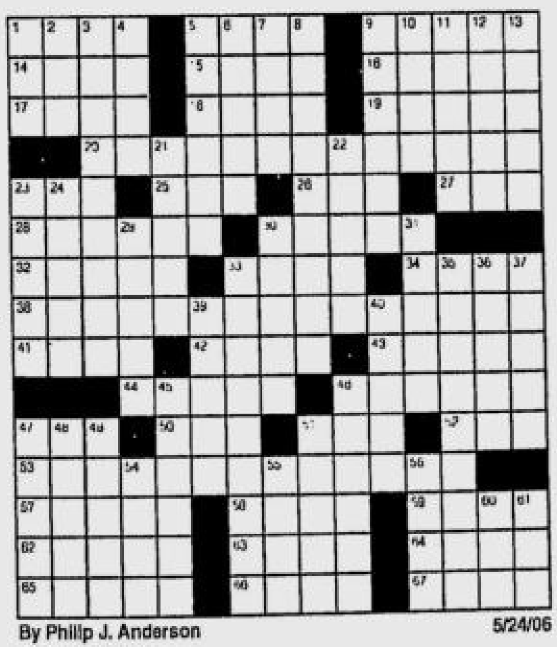
**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is an excellent day to make improvements where you work. However, don't be pushy about them. You won't win any points for doing that.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might have an opportunity to train children or young minds to improve their health or their bodies in some way. Children are always eager to learn something new.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Make improvements to where you live by getting rid of garbage or things that are no longer relevant in your life. Streamline your possessions. Recycle, sell or throw out things today.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19 to March 20): Conversations with others are pretty pushy this morning. You want your way; others want their way. Avoid arguments by postponing these discussions.

# DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

5/24/06

**ACROSS**
1 Ponder
5 Freebie
9 Hammer in court
14 Zatopek or Jannings
15 Tissue additive
16 Appliance maker
17 Scottish berets
18 Rend
19 Light purple
20 Persistent ache?
23 Maglie of baseball
25 Bobbsey twin
26 Author McEwan
27 Ave. crossers
28 Keeps occupied
30 Kofi of the U.N.
32 John Jacob ___
33 French summers
34 Online auction site
38 Persistent ache?
41 Compos mentis
42 Landlord's income
43 Bikini or Eniwetok
44 Beach
46 Prayer book
47 Lode's yield
50 Director Lee
51 Summer cooler
52 Greeks letters
53 Persistent ache?
57 Tony or Oscar
58 Easy pace
59 Cops, to criminals
62 Bottle inhabitant?
63 Actress Swenson
64 Comic Johnson
65 Ford flop
66 Like so, to Luigi
67 Half a fortnight

**DOWN**
1 Convened
2 Ms. Thurman
3 Fool
4 "Lohengrin" heroine
5 Short snooze
6 Textile lubricant
7 Sound of pain
8 To the point
9 Lead-bearing mineral
10 Infamous Ugandan
11 Landscape low points
12 Make into law
13 Needs
21 Entomb
22 Medieval trade association
23 RBI and ERA
24 Tyler of "Ghost Whisperer"
29 Tender spots
30 Expiate
31 Cozy residences
33 Peppy
35 Earth's zone of life
36 Dwight's rival
37 Hollers
39 Humor based upon contradiction
40 Holy honoree
45 "Messiah" composer
46 Rum cocktail
47 Missouri feeder
48 Marry again
49 Roy's Dale
51 Pond denizens
54 Port city of Pennsylvania
55 Tuscany river
56 Tobacco plug
60 Noshed
61 Shatner title word

**Tuesday's Puzzle Solved**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | A | L | T | ■ | S | K | I | T | S | ■ | W | A | R | M |
| O | R | E | O | ■ | Y | E | S | N | O | ■ | O | B | O | E |
| F | A | T | A | L | B | E | R | T | B | R | O | O | K | S |
| A | B | S | T | A | I | N | ■ | ■ | S | A | L | V | E | S |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | G | L | O | B | L | ■ | G | L | O | R | Y |
| S | N | A | F | U | ■ | N | O | R | W | A | Y | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| P | A | G | A | N | S | ■ | N | N | E | ■ | B | O | A | R |
| A | V | E | R | A | G | E | J | O | E | P | E | S | C | I |
| T | E | R | M | ■ | T | K | O | ■ | K | O | A | L | A | S |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | E | A | S | E | U | P | ■ | E | R | O | D | E |
| A | C | E | R | B | ■ | D | R | A | F | T | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| L | A | S | S | E | S | ■ | ■ | T | U | I | T | I | O | N |
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| H | O | R | N | ■ | A | R | T | S | Y | ■ | T | E | S | T |

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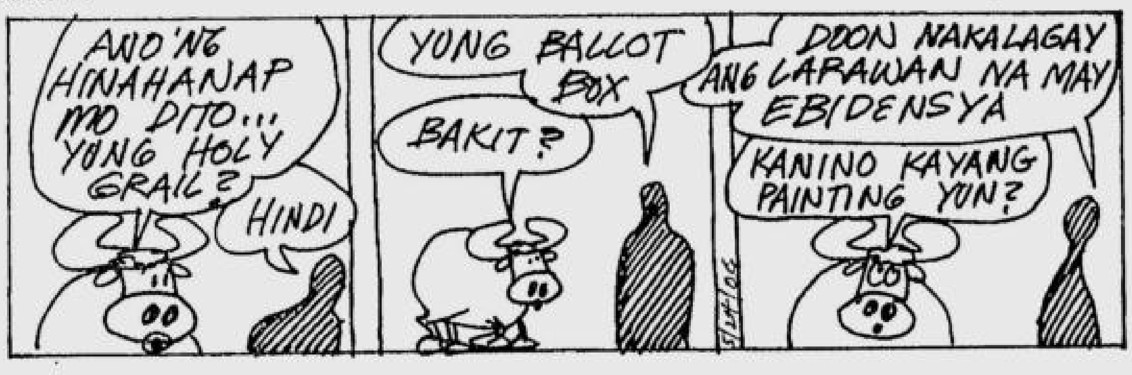
5/24/06

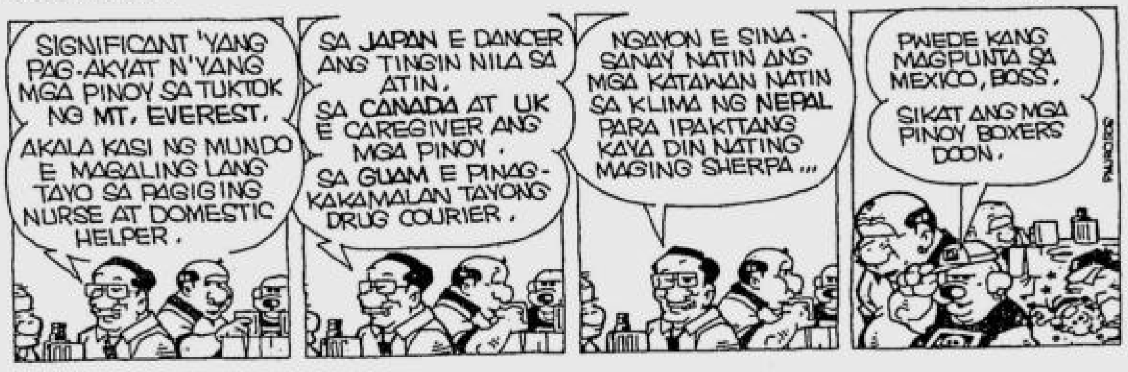
**A. LIPIN**

BY JESS ABRERA


ANO'NG HINAHANAP MO DITO... YUNG HOLY GRAIL?
HINDI
YUNG BALLOT BOX
BAKIT?
DOON NAKALAGAY ANG LARAWAN NA MAY EBIDENSYA
KANINO KAYANG PAINTING YUN?
5/24/06

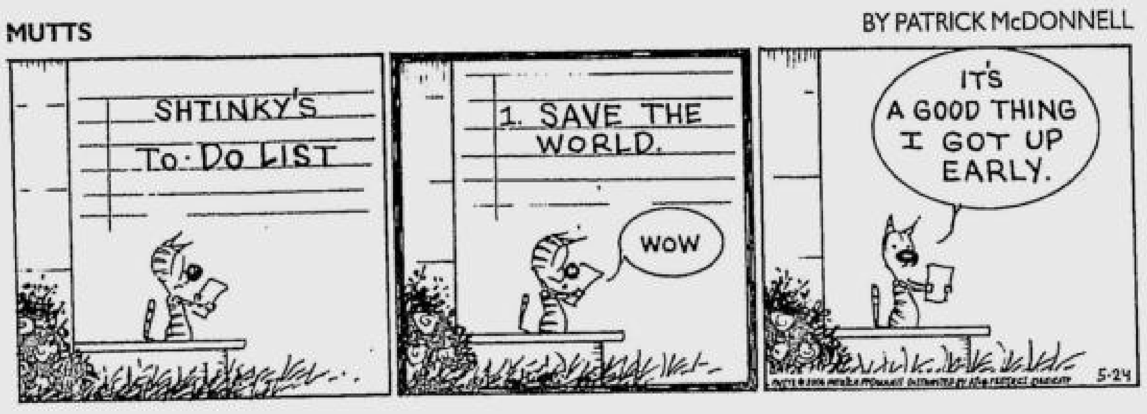
**PUGAD BABOY**

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SIGNIFICANT 'YANG PAG-AKYAT N'YANG MGA PINOY SA TUKTOK NG MT. EVEREST.
AKALA KASI NG MUNDO E MAGALING LANG TAYO SA PAGIGING NURSE AT DOMESTIC HELPER.
SA JAPAN E DANCER ANG TINGIN NILA SA ATIN.
SA CANADA AT UK E CAREGIVER ANG MGA PINOY.
SA GUAM E PINAG-KAKAMALAN TAYONG DRUG COURIER.
NGAYON E SINA-SANAY NATIN ANG MGA KATAWAN NATIN SA KLIMA NG NEPAL PARA IPAKITANG KAYA DIN NATING MAGING SHERPA...
PWEDE KANG MAGPUNTA SA MEXICO, BOSS.
SIKAT ANG MGA PINOY BOXERS DOON.

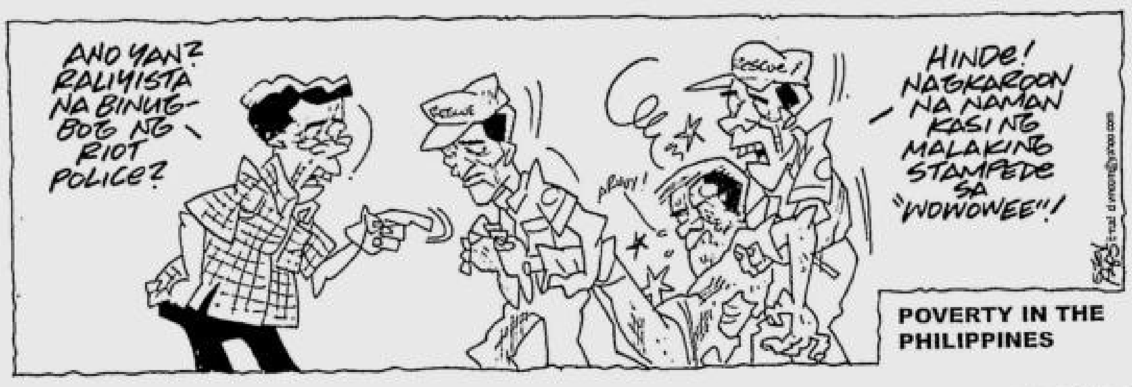
**MUTTS**

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHTINKY'S TO-DO LIST
1. SAVE THE WORLD.
WOW
IT'S A GOOD THING I GOT UP EARLY.
5-24

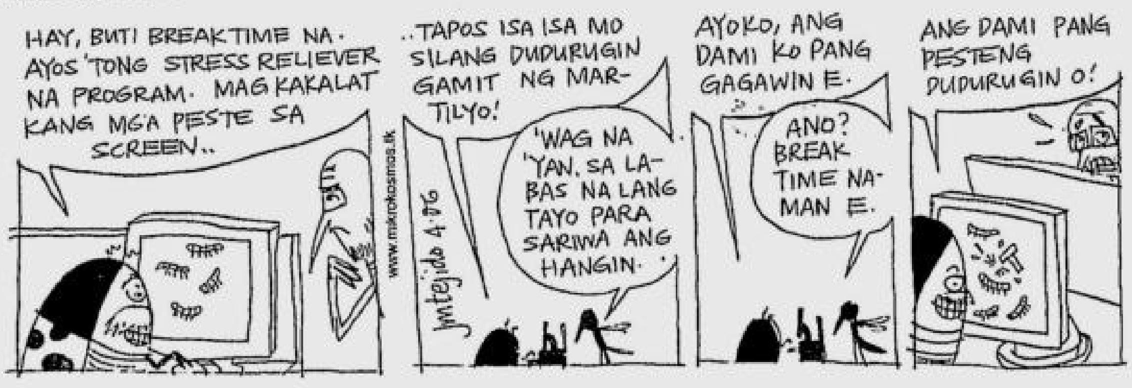
**DIVINE COMEDY**

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANO YAN? RALIYISTA NA BINUG-BOG NG RIOT POLICE?
RESCUE!
HINDE! NAGKAROON NA NAMAN KASING MALAKING STAMPEDE SA "WOWOWEE"!
POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

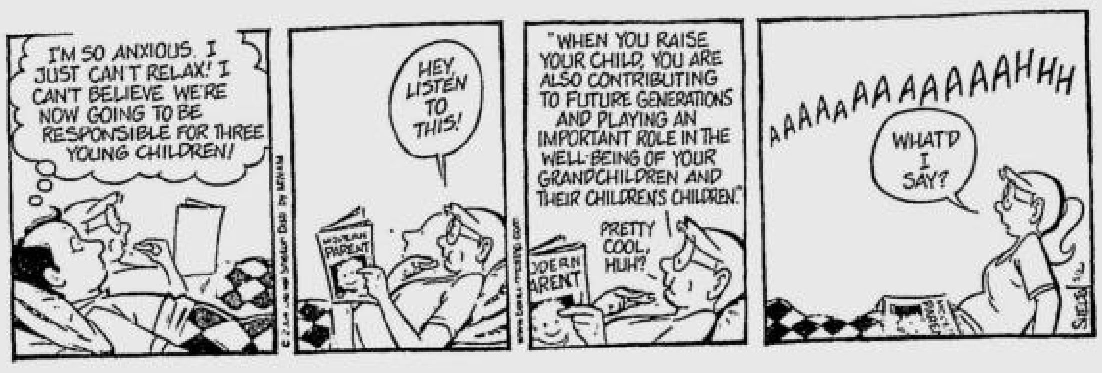
**MIKROKOSMOS**

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HAY, BUTI BREAKTIME NA. AYOS 'TONG STRESS RELIEVER NA PROGRAM. MAG KAKALAT KANG MGA PESTE SA SCREEN..
..TAPOS ISA ISA MO SILANG DUDURUGIN GAMIT NG MAR-TILYO!
'WAG NA 'YAN. SA LA-BAS NA LANG TAYO PARA SARIWA ANG HANGIN.
AYOKO, ANG DAMI KO PANG GAGAWIN E.
ANO? BREAK TIME NA-MAN E.
ANG DAMI PANG PESTENG DUDURUGIN O!
jmtejido 4.06
www.mikrokosmos.tk

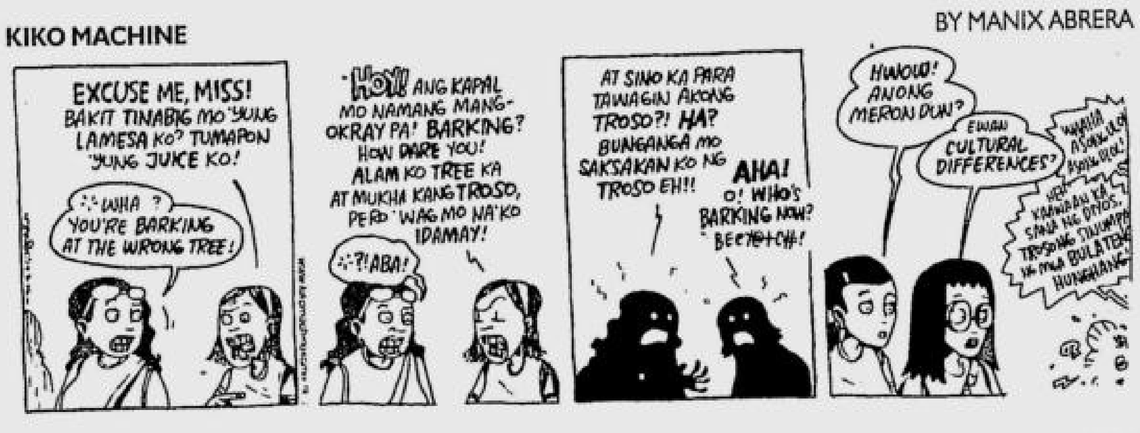
**BEN**

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M SO ANXIOUS. I JUST CAN'T RELAX! I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE NOW GOING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THREE YOUNG CHILDREN!
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS!
"WHEN YOU RAISE YOUR CHILD, YOU ARE ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO FUTURE GENERATIONS AND PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE WELL-BEING OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN."
PRETTY COOL, HUH?
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH
WHAT'D I SAY?

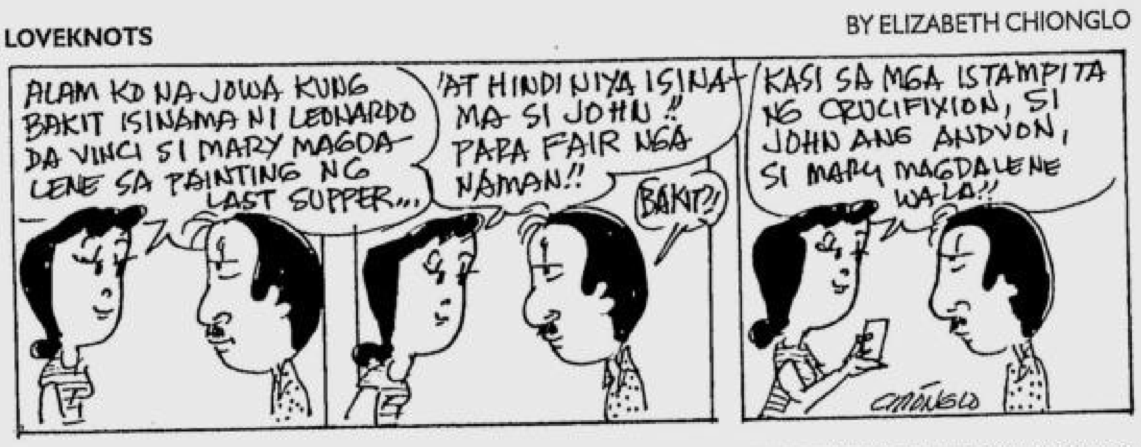
**KIKO MACHINE**

BY MANIX ABRERA


EXCUSE ME, MISS! BAKIT TINABIG MO 'YUNG LAMESA KO? TUMAPON 'YUNG JUICE KO!
WHA? YOU'RE BARKING AT THE WRONG TREE!
HOY! ANG KAPAL MO NAMANG MANG-OKRAY PA! BARKING? HOW DARE YOU! ALAM KO TREE KA AT MUKHA KANG TROSO, PERO 'WAG MO NA'KO IDAMAY!
?!ABA!
AT SINO KA PARA TAWAGIN AKONG TROSO?! HA? BUNGANGA MO SAKSAKAN KO NG TROSO EH!!
AHA! O! WHO'S BARKING NOW? BEE***!
HWOW! ANONG MERON DUN?
EWAN CULTURAL DIFFERENCES?

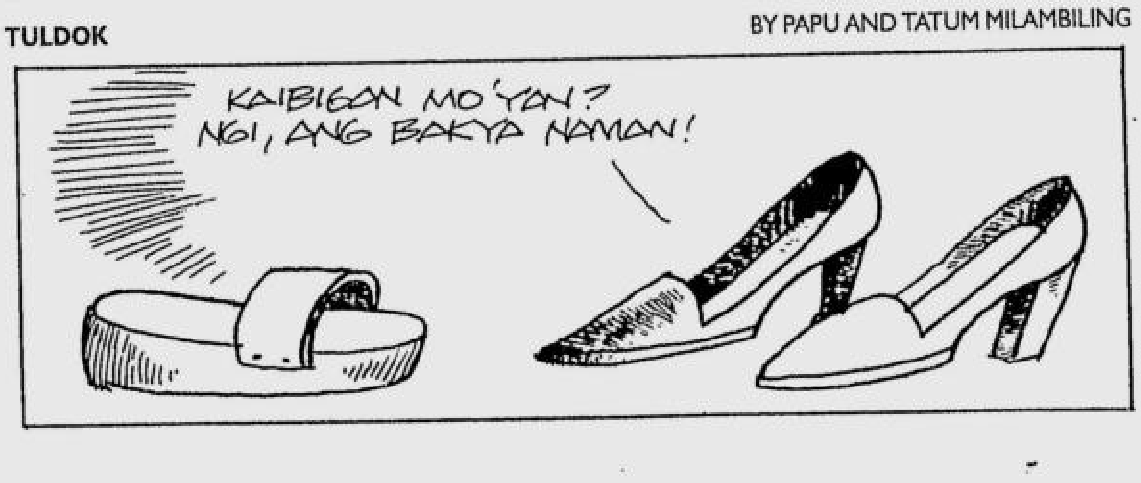
**LOVEKNOTS**

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM KO NA JOWA KUNG BAKIT ISINAMA NI LEONARDO DA VINCI SI MARY MAGDALENE SA PAINTING NG LAST SUPPER...
AT HINDI NIYA ISINAMA SI JOHN!! PARA FAIR NGA NAMAN!!
BAKIT?!
KASI SA MGA ISTAMPITA NG CRUCIFIXION, SI JOHN ANG ANDUON, SI MARY MAGDALENE WALA!!
CHIONGLO

**TULDOK**

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAIBIGAN MO 'YAN? NGI, ANG BAKYA NAMAN!

# Get a dose of reality

**By Pam Pastor**

THE BEST OF I WITNESS VOLUME 2
5 DOCUMENTARIES IN 1 DVD

Documentaries offer a look at the real world—no actors, no scripts, no manipulation

NEWSFLASH: YOU DON'T HAVE to tune in to cable television for quality documentaries.

Howie Severino, Jay Taruc, Kara David, Raffy Tima, Sandra Aguinaldo and the team of GMA 7's I-Witness have been making documentaries about subjects close to our hearts and our homes.

And they have compiled their viewers' favorites in two DVDs—The Best of I-Witness Volumes 1 and 2.

Volume 1 is packed. In "Basurero," which was a finalist in the Magnolia Award at the 10th Shanghai TV Festival in 2004 and winner of a 3rd place Certificate for Creative Excellence at the US International Film and Video Festival 2004, Taruc spends time with people who rely on garbage for food and livelihood. In "Huling Prinsesa," David explores the world of the *binukot* (well-kept maiden) in Capiz.

Is it impossible for a poor country to take care of animals and ensure their freedom? Severino answers this question with "Safari" that takes him from the Manila Zoo to Africa. Aguinaldo learns about the hardships of tuna fishermen and their families in "Sa Tuna't Ginhawa." Tima presents a closer look at the "Ayta"—before and after Pinatubo.

## Volume 2

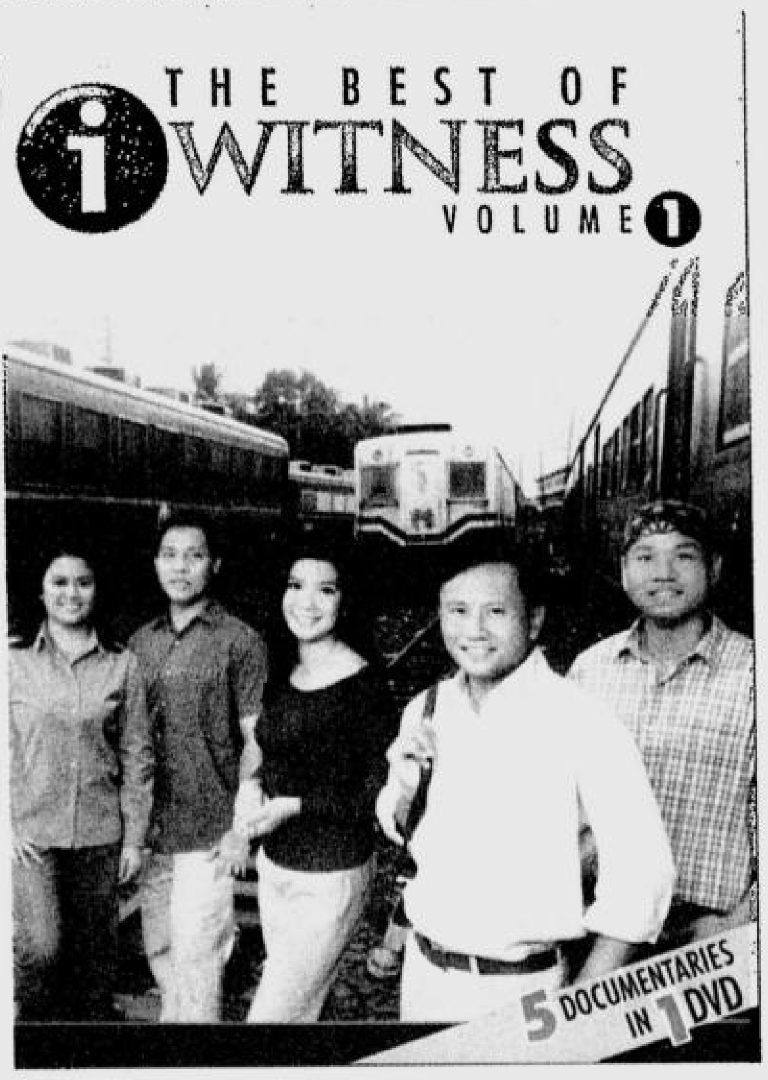
The second DVD is equally interesting. It includes Taruc's "U-Belt"; David's "Buto't Balat" (winner of Best Program in the Social Awareness Category, Asia TV Awards 2005, and finalist in the Adult Education Category, Japan Prize 2005); Aguinaldo's "Karangaya: Inareglong Kasal"; Severino's "Little Bad Boy" (this documentary that traces Rizal's bachelor life in Europe, was a grant recipient of Asia-Europe Foundation in 2004); and Tima's "Ang Tipo Kong Babae."

The broadcasters take reportage one step forward, with Taruc eating food salvaged from garbage cans around the city; Severino drinking fresh animal's blood with a tribe in Africa; David crossing mountains to find the last *binukot* in Capiz; Aguinaldo braving the wild waves of the Pacific Ocean to accompany fishermen on their search for tuna.

More than just reporting, the hosts of I-Witness take a personal approach to the documentaries, making it their mission to deliver a complete story.

Now that's reality TV.

*The Best of I-Witness DVDs Volumes 1 and 2 are available at PowerBooks branches nationwide.*



# Share your secret with the world

The Post Secret blog gives us a peek into the real thoughts of real people

POSTSECRET

THE IDEA WAS SIMPLE BUT brilliant. For a while now, the creator of the Post Secret blog (http://postsecret.blogspot.com) has been asking people to mail in their secrets anonymously on one side of a homemade postcard.

According to the site, "Each secret can be a regret, hope, funny experience, unseen kindness, fantasy, belief, fear, betrayal, erotic desire, feeling, confession, or childhood humiliation. Reveal anything—as long as it is true and you have never shared it with anyone before."

These postcards are then scanned and new ones are uploaded onto the Post Secret blog every Sunday for the world to see.

Last Mother's Day, this was one of the new secrets posted: "Mom, I'm sorry I ran away all the time. I wasn't running from you. I was running from me, and I still am."

Here are other memorable secrets:

"I'm terrified of not existing."

"I cried for Anakin Skywalker in 'Star Wars Episode III' but not for the tsunami victims."

"My mom killed my dad, long before he killed himself."

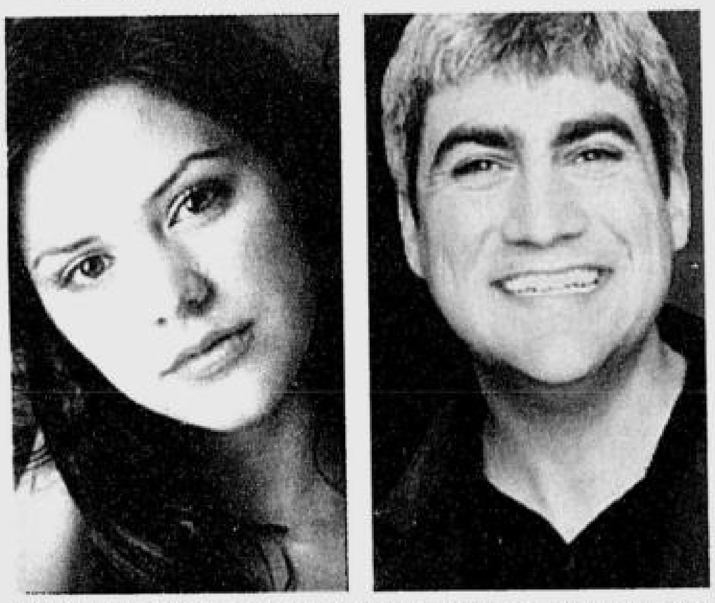
"When I see an ugly bride, what I am really seeing is a glimmer of hope for the future. Maybe I will marry, someday."

Some secrets posted on the site are funny, some touching, some painful, some goosebump-inducing. But they all offer a peek into the human soul.

Every day, thousands of people from around the world visit the site, to read other people's secrets and to identify with them. One reader from Calgary said, "When I read these, I don't feel so alone."

The blog has become so popular that it has won awards and has even spawned a book that reprints the most requested postcards from the blog.

Whether you choose to share your own secret, or read about someone else's, the Post Secret blog is a must-visit. It's a virtual connection, a peek into the real thoughts of real people.



**KATHARINE** McPhee and Taylor Hicks: McPheever vs Soul Patrol

# *Win 'American Idol' goodies!*

GRAB YOUR LAST CHANCE to win American Idol goodies this season! Make sure you pay attention when you watch "American Idol" on Star World tonight, because 2bU! is giving away exclusive, limited-edition "American Idol" goodies to three fans who can answer the following questions correctly about tonight's show:

1. What will Katharine McPhee's first song be?
2. What will Taylor Hicks sing last?
3. Who will win this year's American Idol?

Tune in to "American Idol" season 5 on StarWorld, direct via satellite every Wednesday and Thursday, 5 p.m., with replays at 8 and 11:30 p.m. Don't miss the excitement of the grand finals on May 24 and 25, only on Star World!

Here are last week's winners:

1. Angie Tan
2. Julie T. Lim
3. Maria Rosario Insigne

Winners may claim their prizes from Stratworks at 7/F, 105 Rada St. Legaspi Village, Makati City, or they may call May Legaspi at 7513805 to 06.

**WINNER** Hugh Pedron (center)

# Lucky 'Idol' fanatic will see season finale live!

HUGH PEDRON OF PARAÑAQUE bested other finalists in Star World's American Idol Know-It-All Trivia Contest at the Dolphin Park, Glorietta 4, recently. His reward: a trip to the US to watch this season's hotly contested American Idol finale performances tonight and the awarding tomorrow, courtesy of Star World. With him in photo are Star World's Sasa Carlos-Tan, Adel Chik, and 89.9 DJs Kelly and Joey.

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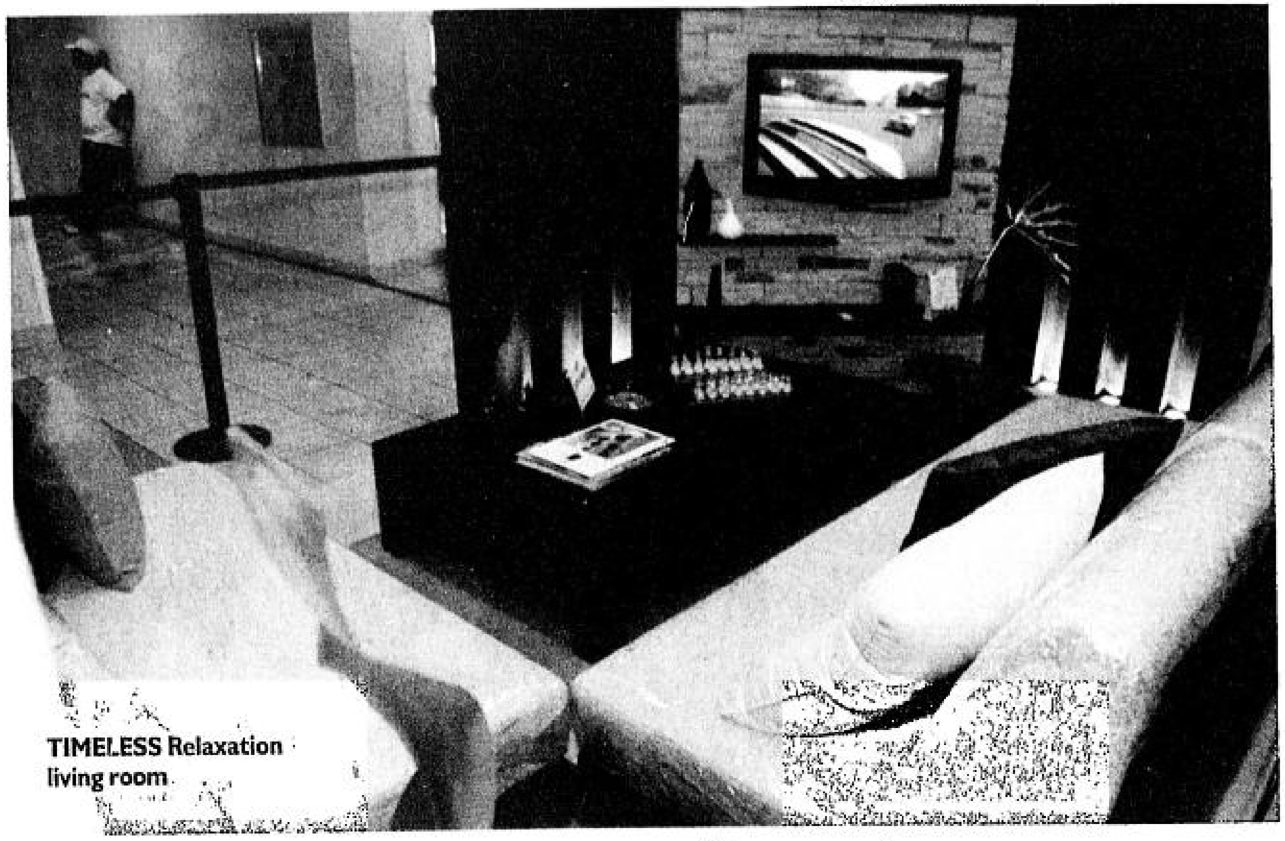


**TIMELESS** Relaxation living room

# Dare to design

## PSID plus Samsung equals four eye-catching living spaces

**JIE PAMBID, PSID dean; Dong Ha Jang, VP for consumers electronics; and Jerry Lacson, GM for consumers electronics marketing-Sepco**

**PEN ROQUE, Cheil communications manager; Pambid and Angie Limbaco, brand management head; with PSID students who designed the Timeless Relaxation living room**

By Pam Pastor

SAMSUNG HAD A CHALLENGE FOR students of the Philippine School for Interior Design (PSID). They were asked to create four eye-catching spaces—a living room, a den, a kitchen and a bedroom—inspired by Samsung's LCD and Slimfit TVs.

The PSID students tackled the mission readily and, a few weeks ago, their exhibit was unveiled at the Shangri-La Mall.

The exhibit was held at the same time as the Dare To Compare Mall Tour, where Samsung encouraged consumers to check out its latest television lineup and compare them to offerings of other brands.

Samsung's newest TV products include a unique LCD (liquid crystal display) television that offers a 5,000:1 contrast ratio and a 12.8 billion-color display and the only 40 cm-deep flat Slimfit TV.

### The living room

Chai Lopez, Xavier Peñafiel, Anna Francesca Villacorte, Sheanah Chan, Christian Santos, Henry Paguio, Karen Uy, Leah Balagtas, Mark Jeff Pecayo, Margarita Borja, Samantha Joe Fu and Jimlet Avilla worked on the living room that they called Fountain of Memories. The name was a nod to the cascading fountain that the group added to their modern-designed room.

To add drama to their space, they used an incised painted wall as the backdrop of the LCD TV. To achieve a "simple and sophisticated" look, the team played with the contrast of light and dark colors and selected textures that heightened the room's relaxing ambience.

### The kitchen

Gigi Figueroa, April Sim-Alcantara, Jewel Castro and Bursely Co created a kitchen called Salt and Pepper. The name was a nod to the room's achromatic color scheme. The team used Italian Bisazza mosaic tiles to add accents to the room's clean lines and smooth finish.

The room featured a Samsung 26-inch LCD television, washing machine and MHSS refrigerator. Sim-Alcantara said, "I think Samsung is a brave brand because it strives hard to create digital lifestyle trends through its creativity and innovativeness, as well as enhance the lives of its consumers through cutting-edge products."

### The bedroom

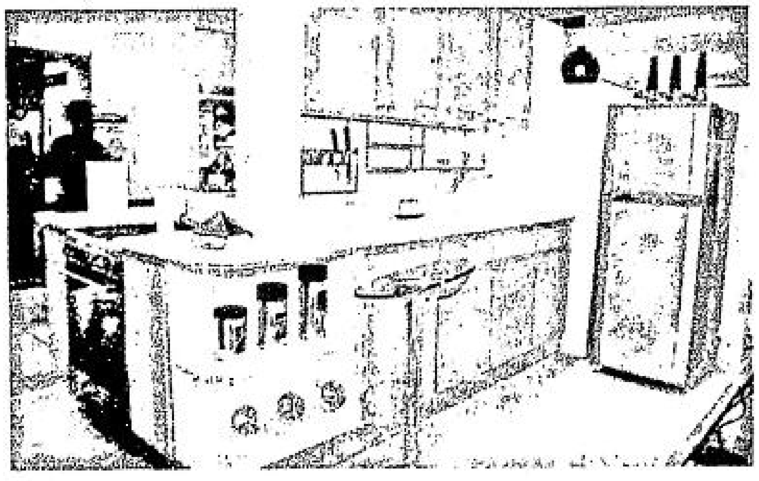
Jade Ang Ban Giok, Aisa Sta. Maria, Danika Rae Madrid, Bernard Valencia, Dianne Sy, Dimples Panotes and Chelsia Li, who were tasked with designing a bedroom, came up with the Chic and Sleek in Serene Dimensions concept.

The group used a 32" SlimFit TV as the room's focal point, along with a split-type airconditioner. Relaxing colors and soft fabrics helped transform the space into a comfortable cocoon, a cozy bedroom, an urban refuge.

### The den

Miko Sta. Ana, Le-Anne Rubiano, Karen Eleazar, Cheska Nolasco, Gaea Anne Fu and Christine Monteverde, assigned to create a den, conceptualized a room for Timeless Relaxation. The group added Samsung's 40" LCD TV to their inviting and contemporary room.

For the elegant and tasteful creation, the team found a balance for their achromatic color scheme by combining textures and shapes. An L-shaped sofa helped maximize the sitting capacity. The result was a den most people would love to relax in for hours on end.



SALT and Pepper kitchen

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